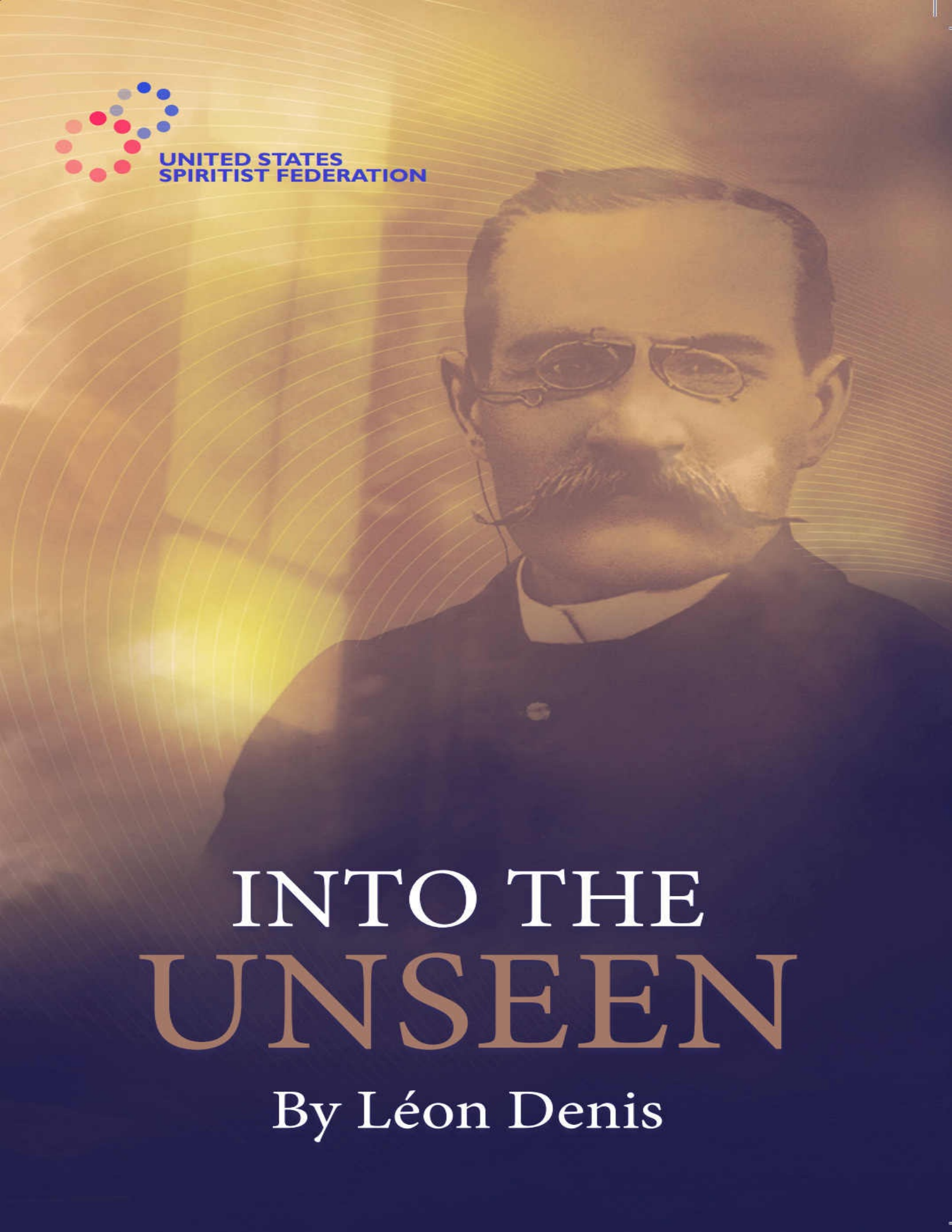
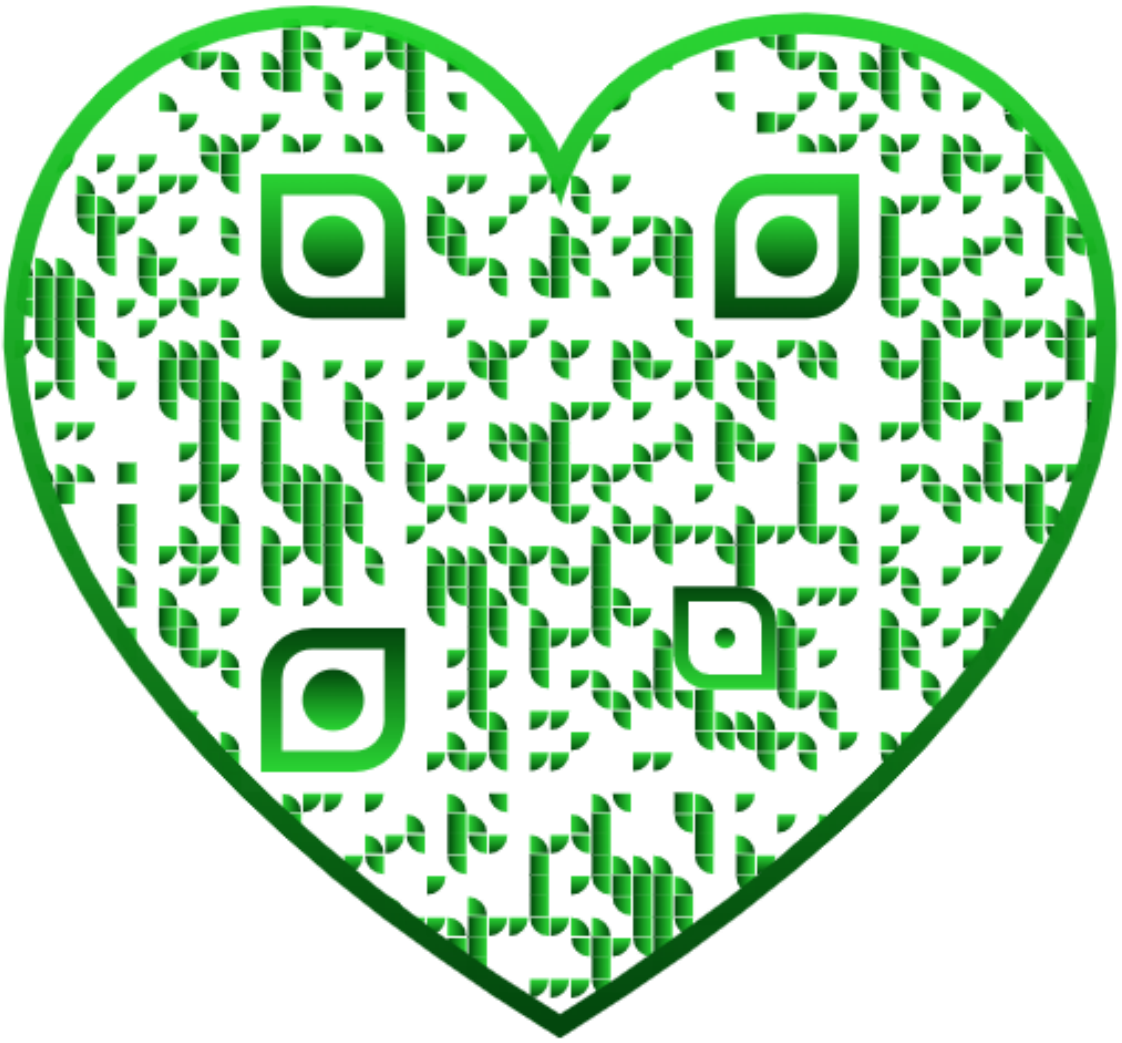


INTO THE UNSEEN

By Léon Denis



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Léon Denis

INTO THE UNSEEN

Spiritism & Mediumship

Translated by H. M. Monteiro

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Introduction

For fifty years an intimate and frequent communication has been established between the world of the living and that of the spirits. The veils of death were half lifted, showing a kind, smiling face instead of a dismal, ugly head. Souls have spoken in a language that consoled many sorrows, soothed many pains and strengthened the failing courage of numerous individuals. Human destiny was revealed, no longer seen as harsh and merciless as depicted by old beliefs, but rather as engaging, fair and impartial, enlightened for all by the rays of divine mercy.

Spiritism has since spread, seizing upon the world. Scorned and despised at first, it eventually gained attention, arousing interest. All those who have not immobilized themselves by their own prejudice and routine, but instead approached it in a frank and straight manner, have been won over by it. Now it permeates everywhere, being discussed at every table and present in all homes. At its appeals those two old secular fortresses, science and church, which had been hermetically closed until recently, lower their walls and open their doors. Soon it might even impose itself as a sovereign master.

What does it actually bring with it? Is it always hope, light and truth everywhere? Besides the consolations which fall upon one's soul like dew on a flower, and in addition to the luminous ray which dissipates the anguish of the seeker as it lights up the path, does it not also have its share of errors and disappointments?

Spiritism will be what we humans make of it. *Similia similibus!* [1] In contact with humanity, the loftiest truths are sometimes distorted and veiled. They may become a source of abuse. A drop of rain, depending on the spot where it falls, remains a pearl or becomes mud.

A cause of concern for us is the tendency of certain adherents to neglect the loftier side of Spiritism, holding the source of pure teachings and high inspirations, in order to confine themselves solely to earthly experimentation, by exclusively researching physical phenomena.

Some would like to place Spiritism in the same narrow outlook of official science; yet this latter, thoroughly imbued with materialistic theories, would repulse such an alliance. The study of the soul, already difficult and profound

in itself, has remained a closed book for science. Its methods, in their deficiency, are totally unsuitable for an in-depth, wider study of the spirit world. The science of the unseen will always lie beyond human methods. There is a side to Spiritism, and not the least one, which is elusive to control and analysis, namely, the action of a free spirit on the spiritual plane, and the nature of the forces at a spirit's disposal.

Little by little, a new science is emerging from Spiritist studies. But to the mood of scientific investigation, one must add elevation of thought, sentiment and the impulses of the heart. Otherwise, communion with higher spiritual beings will become impracticable; any assistance from them, any effective protection will be lacking. Now, this is everything when carrying out experiments. No success can be attained, no guaranteed result, without the assistance and protection from high above. These can be obtained only through mental training, by leading a pure and dignified life.

Every adherent must know that the rule par excellence for establishing a good rapport with the unseen is the law of affinity and attraction. In this respect, those who seek lower ends will find them and lower themselves with them; whereas those who aspire to the higher summits will reach them sooner or later and turn them into a new way of ascension. If you want highly elevated manifestations, start by making an effort to elevate yourself. Experimentation, just insofar as it has beauty and magnitude – which is communion with the higher spiritual realm – can be achieved, not by the most learned, but by the most dignified, the best, those with the greatest patience, conscience and moral wisdom!

By belittling Spiritism as being of an exclusively experimental character, some believe they are catering to the positivism which prevails in this day and age, thus hoping to attract scientists toward so-called psychism.[2] In this way one succeeds above all in making contact with the lower elements of the Hereafter, which comprise a multitude of backward spirits, whose fatal influence then envelops and oppresses the mediums, pushing them to resort to fraud, while at the same time spreading evil emanations among experimenters, and often conniving with them in sowing errors and deceptions.

With eager proselytism, excessive and dangerous in its consequences although inspired by laudable feeling, some people want to get facts at all costs. In the nervous agitation with which they pursue phenomena, they

hastily proclaim as true that which in fact is fictitious or dubious. Because of the mindset that some bring to experimentation, irresponsible spirits are attracted which swarm around us. Hence manifestations of bad (vicious) taste and spirit obsessions multiply. Many experimenters fall victim to the energies that they believe to have mastered. Many Spiritists and mediums become instruments of unconscious forces or evil spirits, for lacking method and moral elevation.

Abuses are rampant, therefore opponents of Spiritism can easily find all the evidence they need to promote a perfidious campaign and spread disparaging criticism against it.

Nevertheless, the interest and dignity of the Spiritist cause oblige us to react against such trivial experimentation and the rising tide of common phenomena which threaten to submerge the summits of the idea.

Spiritism represents a new phase of human evolution. The same law which, through time, has caused the various fractions of humanity to gradually approach one another, after a long time apart, is now beginning to make its effects felt in the Hereafter. The means of communication which connect living humans on Earth are gradually extending to the inhabitants of the unseen world.

However, in the successive widening of its field of action, humanity has met with many difficulties. Once multiplied, relations do not always yield favorable results. They also pose dangers, especially as regards the hidden world, which is harder to penetrate and examine than our own. There, as in here, knowledge and ignorance, truth and error, virtue and vice are all mingled together, with the aggravating circumstance that, while making their influence felt, they remain concealed from our eyes. Hence the necessity of using extreme caution when venturing into the field of experimentation; and even so, only after long and patient studies.

We must combine theoretical knowledge and a sense of control with moral elevation to be able to discern good from evil, true from false, and reality from illusion in Spiritism. We must also realize the true nature of mediumship, the responsibilities it entails, and the purposes for which it has been granted to us.

Spiritism is not only the demonstration through facts of our survival. It is also the path through which inspirations from the higher world descend upon humanity. As such, it is more than a science, it is the teaching from heaven to Earth, as an enlarged and popularized reconstruction of the secret traditions from the past, with the awakening of that prophetic school which had given rise to the most famed mediums in the East. With Spiritism, those faculties which used to be the privilege of a few, now spread over many individuals. Mediumship has since proliferated; but besides the advantages it procures, its pitfalls and hazards should never be concealed or disguised.

Actually, there are two types of Spiritism. The one connects us to higher order spirits and also to the nearest and dearest souls of those we have known on Earth and were the joy of our existence. Through it, permanent revelation is effected, the initiation of humans into the supreme laws. It is a powerful source of inspiration, with the descent of spirits into a human envelope, by means of a medium's organism who, under sacred influence, is able to make us hear words of life and light, the nature of which is unmistakable, for they permeate and warm one's soul. They illuminate the obscure problems of destiny. The impression of grandeur created by these manifestations always leaves a deep imprint in the hearts and minds of the listeners. Those who have never experienced it cannot really understand the true meaning of Spiritism.

Then there is the other type of experimentation, which is frivolous and worldly, putting us in contact with the lowest elements in the unseen world, a fact that tends to diminish the respect due to the Hereafter. It is a kind of profanation of the religion of death, to treat with levity the solemn manifestation of those who have been relieved from their fleshly vestures.

However, it must be admitted that even this sort of low-level Spiritism may have its uses. At least it has served to familiarize people with a whole side of the hidden world. These common phenomena and trivial manifestations may sometimes provide striking proofs of identity. Characteristic traits do emerge that force researchers to admit their veracity. However, we should pay attention to them only insofar as their study is profitable to us, and where our action can be exercised in an effective manner on the backward spirits that produce them. Their influence on mediums is otherwise unhealthy and depressing. We must aspire higher, ascending in

thought toward purer regions, toward the high mansions of the spirit. Only thus can the human person find true solace, succor and spiritual forces.

It cannot be overemphasized that, in this domain, the effects that we can obtain are always in proportion to our own character. Every human being who enters into relation with the unseen world, through wishes and appeals, will inevitably draw to themselves spirit entities with an affinity to their own mental and moral condition. The vast realm of souls is peopled with both benevolent and evil spirits. They are placed at the various steps of the infinite ladder, from the lowest and coarsest souls, still at the confines of animality, up to the noble and pure spirits, messengers of light, that bring divine thought radiations to all corners of the universe. When we do not know how, or do not wish to direct our aspirations and fluidic vibrations toward higher order entities, in order to obtain their assistance, we remain at the mercy of evil influences around us, which, more often than not, have led many an imprudent experimenter to suffer the direst disappointments.

If, conversely, we disentangle ourselves from inferior suggestions, by using all our willpower while steering clear of any puerile, selfish, or material concerns, and instead seeking Spiritism as a means of elevation and moral betterment, we may enter into communion with great souls that are the messengers of truth. Then vivifying and regenerating fluids start descending upon us, and powerful breezes carry us up to serene regions, from where our spirits can contemplate the spectacle of universal life in the majestic harmony of laws and worlds.

Preface to the new edition [3]

In twenty years since this book first appeared, Spiritism has continued its ascending march, enriched with most valuable experiments and testimonies. Studies carried by Lodge, Myers and Lombroso, among others, served to enhance its prestige with the scientific authority it once lacked, leading, so to speak, to its final consecration. On the other hand, however, abuses and frauds which were mentioned earlier, have also multiplied. Is it true then, and a history law, that in order to gain greater circulation, an idea must lose in quality, strength and insight?

From the standpoint of the testimonies collected and the progress made, the situation of Spiritism is not the same in France as it is in certain other countries. While in England and Italy it has won acclaim in academic circles, most French scientists still hesitate to accept it as true, even though it rests on incontestable facts and meets the imperious needs of our time.

Every impartial mind must recognize that neither official science nor religion has fulfilled the intellectual needs and aspirations of the greater part of humanity. It is hardly surprising, then, that so many people have sought solutions and enlightenment elsewhere, in fields that are scarcely explored, albeit very rich in psychological resources which those old institutions are powerless to provide. Such studies may displease some timorous minds, who may condemn and criticize them with vain words that the wind will carry away! In spite of such demands, rebukes and anathemas, intelligent beings will always go toward what seems to be juster, clearer and better to them.

The contempt of some and the condemnation of others, will have no effect upon the latter, who will retort: do better and more instead. So, all you clerics and scientists out there, who can devote yourselves to the leisure of thought, why do you not learn how to comfort and relieve fellow beings that are bent under the weight of some heavy material predicament, while explaining to them the reason for their ills, and providing evidence of future compensation, instead of mocking or fulminating in the void? That would be the only way

you might retain your supremacy!

Moreover, one might ask who is best able to judge the facts and discern the truth: a brain full of prejudices and preconceived notions, or a free spirit liberated from all scientific and religious routine? History has already answered this question for us.

Of course, official representatives of science have rendered eminent services to thought. They have thus avoided many aberrations; yet how many obstacles they have put up, in many cases opposing the expansion of true and integral knowledge!

Professor Charles Richet, who is a competent judge of the subject, vigorously highlighted the errors and weaknesses of official science in the January issue of *The Annals of Psychical Science* (London, 1905).

On this respect, democracy has proved to be no less absolutist or tyrannical than the fallen monarchies. It now seeks the leveling of minds and proscribes those who attempt to wrest themselves from material vulgarities. The lowering of education standards has impoverished academic thought, weakened characters, and frozen initiatives.

In vain one will seek to find among French scientists and scholars an example of moral courage comparable to that displayed in England by William Crookes, Alfred Russell Wallace, Oliver Lodge, and others, together with Lombroso and others in Italy.

When it comes to psychism, ordinary common sense seems to be lacking in most researchers. Prof. Théodore Flournoy admits it when he says that, “for all humanity in ancient times, and still today for the great masses of people that compose it, only the Spiritist hypothesis seems to be truly in accordance with the most elementary common sense; whereas, for us, as the offspring of science, stuffed with naturalistic mechanism since our school days, this same hypothesis turns out to be utterly repugnant to the very depth of our common sense, which is also most elementary.”

Then, in support of his statement, he cites the two following examples, both involving a fact which is now universally acknowledged:

The great Helmholtz [4] once told Professor William Barrett, “I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses, would lead me to believe in the transmission of them from one person to another. It is clearly impossible.”

Professor William James has reported that a prominent biologist once said

to him, that even if the proofs of telepathy turned out to be true, scientists should band together to suppress or hide them, because such facts would overturn the principle of uniformity of nature and all sorts of other things that scientists cannot do without in order to carry on their researches.

Yet even so, Spiritist facts never ceased to multiply, imposing themselves with such force as to make scientists attempt to explain them. However neither the psycho-physiological lucubrations of Pierre Janet, nor the polygonal theories of Dr. Grasset, nor the cryptomnesia [5] of T. Flournoy have been able to satisfy independent researchers. When you have acquired some experience of psychical phenomena, you become appalled by the poverty of the reasonings offered in scientific critiques of Spiritism. They always choose, from a multitude of facts, only those that may seemingly corroborate their theories, while carefully passing over in silence the other innumerable cases that contradict them. Is this procedure really worthy of true scientists?

Unbiased and persistent studies have led to quite different conclusions. Speaking of Spiritism, Sir Oliver Lodge, rector of the University of Birmingham and member of the Royal Academy of Sciences, stated that he came to believe with certainty in future life based on purely scientific evidence. (Cf. *The Annals of Psychical Sciences*, year 1897, p. 158)

Professor James H. Hyslop of Columbia University, New York, once wrote that caution and reserve do not contradict the opinion that the Spiritist explanation is, until now, the most rational hypothesis.

It can be seen, then, that while there has been no shortage of mockery against Spiritists in scientific circles, some scientists have done them justice. Professor William Barrett of the University of Dublin expressed himself in the following terms during his inauguration as President of the Society for Psychical Research, on January 29, 1904:

“Since long, no matter how much some try to ridicule Spiritists, that does not keep them from the path that leads to the advancement of human knowledge, because they are imbued with the spirit and the method of the early times, when roads had to be opened through virgin forests, on which now we can proceed with ease.” [6]

In his book *Raymond or Life and Death*,[7] Sir Oliver Lodge writes, narrating the spirit manifestations of his son, killed in 1915 on the French front during the war:

“The pain caused by exposing one’s own sorrow and its alleviation, to possible scoffers, becomes almost negligible in view of the service which it is legitimate to hope may thus be rendered to mourners, if they can derive comfort by learning that communication across the gulf is possible. ... Some few more perhaps may be thus led to pay critical attention to any assurance of continued and happy and useful existence which may reach them from the other side.”

He then states that he is convinced that Raymond is now serving in other regions, while “continuing his noble career in more peaceful surroundings,” and therefore not idle.

A French newspaper of October 8, 1920 brings the following statement made by Camille Flammarion to its editors:

“Dialogues with the dead exist. There is no collective hallucination that can explain certain noises, certain displacements of objects, and especially certain precise revelations unknown to all the assistants … The dead survive. They can see and hear us. In some cases they are still interested in their earthly affairs, they reveal to the living the details known only to them to which they attach importance, anguish. It seems that death changes them very little.”

While paying homage to Spiritists, as an impartial judge, Professor Barrett acknowledged that their zeal was not free from criticism. Today as then, this opinion can be verified. The exaltation of certain adherents, their eagerness to proclaim imaginary or doubtful facts, and a deficiency of control over experiments, have often detracted from the cause to which they believe they serve. This is perhaps what justifies to a certain extent, the defiant, sometimes hostile attitude of certain scientists towards Spiritism.

Professor Richet wrote in the London edition of *The Annals of Psychical Science* (January 1905, p. 25):

“If Spiritists have been very bold, they have, unfortunately, shown very little accuracy in their studies, and the history of their aberrations is a very lamentable one. But our task is not, for the moment, to criticize their work ... It is enough for our present purpose to have shown that their audacity was justifiable, and that we cannot in the name of our fallible, incomplete, embryonic science, complain of their audacity. On the contrary, we ought to be grateful to them for the daring they have shown.”

Mr. Richet's reservations are no less grounded than his praise. Many experimenters do not bring to their studies the necessary caution and reserve. Instead, they prefer loud manifestations, numerous and repeated materializations and noisy phenomena, without realizing that mediumship is able produce facts of this nature only exceptionally and at long intervals. When a spirit possesses a professional medium of this order, it obsesses, overworks, and pushes him or her to give frequent sittings. Fatally, this slides into the slope of trickery. Hence the frauds and deceptions pointed out by so many public newspapers.

Far better in my opinion is to have mediumistic facts on a more modest and intimate scale, obtained in orderly sittings where harmony and unity of thoughts reign, and heavenly things drift down like morning dew over the altered soul, enlightening, comforting, and making it better. Physical phenomena sittings, even genuine ones, have always left me with an impression of emptiness, discomfort, and uneasiness, owing to the influences prevailing in them.

There is no doubt that researchers such as Crookes, Hyslop and Lombroso, owed to professional mediums the fine results they obtained. But in their experiments, they surrounded themselves with precautions that are not customary among Spiritists. In the course of materializing sittings given in Paris by an American medium in 1906 and 1907, with disastrous repercussions, Spiritists had established a rule which sitters[8] undertook to respect and obey, with the unforeseen consequence of the medium being relieved of any effective control. The darkness was almost complete at the time of the apparitions. The attending sitters were made to talk aloud, sing, hold hands forming a magnetic chain, and above all refrain from touching the materialized forms. In this way, sight, hearing, and touch were all but obliterated.

It is true that those conditions were dictated by a laudable intention, for in general terms, as will be seen in the course of this book, they favor the production of phenomena. Yet, in the circumstances, they also helped to conceal trickery. The faculties of that medium were real, however, and authentic phenomena took place in the first sittings, which we shall recount later on. Then it became a mixture of real and fake phenomena. Finally, deception became evident and constant. Having at first pointed out in a

special article the phenomena that showed signs of authenticity, I afterward felt morally compelled to denounce the compromising ones which were proven to be fraudulent.

Now, a few words about Spiritism as a body of thought comprising a synthesis of concordant mediumistic revelations, obtained all around the globe under the inspiration of great spirits. Spiritism has increasingly been asserted and popularized. Even among its own opponents, there are those who feel morally obligated to do it justice, by acknowledging all the benefits and ineffable consolations that it has brought to distressed souls.

For his part, J. Maxwell, a French Deputy-Attorney-General at the Court of Appeal, expressed himself as follows: “The extent to which this doctrine is spreading is one of the most curious things of the day ... they give me the impression that I am assisting at the birth of a religious movement called to a great destiny.” [9]

In addition, Professor Théodore Flournoy, following an inquiry undertaken on the subject, has made the following remarks: [10]

“Here comes a general concert of praise for the beauty and excellence of the Spiritist philosophy, an almost unanimous testimony as to its salutary influence on the intellectual, moral, and religious life of its followers. Even those who have become totally suspicious of such phenomena and resent them, as it were, for the disappointments and doubts they leave behind, do acknowledge the benefits they have derived from this philosophy.”

And further on:

“There are Spiritists who have never witnessed any experiments and do not even harbor such desire, yet claim to have been won over by the simplicity, beauty, and moral and religious evidence of Spiritist teachings (successive existences, unlimited progress of the soul, etc.). One must not denigrate these beliefs, whose value is undeniable, since many souls declare that in them they have found life and an alternative to both religious orthodoxy, on account of certain repugnant dogmas such as that of endless punishment, which they can no longer accept; and the despairing negations of atheist materialism.” [11]

Yet, regardless of what Mr. Flournoy has said, even in the Spiritist camp

there are plenty of objections. Among those whom the scientific side of Spiritism attracts, there are some who show little concern for its philosophy. This is because, in order to fully appreciate the greatness of the Spiritist philosophy, one must have suffered. Happy people are always more or less selfish and cannot understand the source of consolation which lies in it. Phenomena may interest them but, in order to stir up their inner flame, the cold breaths of adversity become necessary. Deep truths appear in plenitude only to those who have matured through trial and pain.

In such matters, everything depends on one's previous inclinations. Some, captivated by the phenomena, prefer to experiment. Others, enlightened by the experience of centuries past or by the lessons of present life, place education above all things. Wisdom consists in uniting the two sides of Spiritism into one harmonious whole.

As will be seen in this book, experiments require rare qualities. Many individuals, lacking in perseverance, withdraw after a few unsuccessful attempts and lapse into disinterest when failing to obtain much sought-after proofs as quickly as they desired.

Those who persevere will encounter sooner or later solid and convincing elements on which to establish an unshakable conviction. That was the case for me. Although I was drawn to Spiritism from an early age, experimental evidence was slow to come. It was only after ten or fifteen years of research that they began to occur profusely and irrepressibly. I will now explain this long wait, where many experiments had led to incoherent and often contradictory results. At first, I was not yet ripe for a complete disclosure of higher truths. But as I went further down my path, communion with my unseen protectors became closer and deeper. I felt guided through the pitfalls and difficulties that my task presented. During the hours of trial, most tender consolations descended to me. In time, I have become able to feel the constant presence of spirits, and to distinguish with the aid of a sure inner sense the nature and personality of those that remain my source of influence and inspiration. Obviously I am unable to procure for others the intense sensations that I myself have experienced. These explain my certainty of a life beyond this one, and my absolute conviction of the existence of an unseen world. That is why all attempts to divert me from my path have been and will remain fruitless. My confidence and faith have been sustained by daily manifestations; my existence has partly become a double life, shared

between fellow humans and spirits. I therefore consider it my sacred duty to strive to disseminate and make accessible to all the knowledge of the laws that connect Earth’s humanity to that of the spirit world, and set out the path of endless evolution for all souls.

Part one

Experimental Spiritism: Laws

I

Spiritist science

As we humans move slowly along the path of knowledge, our horizon widens and new perspectives open up before us. Our science is limited, yet nature is boundless. Science is merely the totality of concepts of one century which the science of the next century surpasses and overruns. In it everything is provisional and incomplete. It studies the laws of motion, the manifestations of force and life; however it knows nothing yet about their active causes, about force and motion in their fundamentals. The problem of life itself still eludes science and the essence of things remain an inscrutable mystery to it.

Despite the obstinate denials and blindness of certain scientists, every day some of their views are contradicted. This is what has often happened to representatives of the materialist and positivist schools of thought. The study and observation of psychical phenomena have upset their theories of the nature and destiny of beings.

The human soul is not, as they assert, a product or outcome of the physical organism, that vanishes with the body's death; it is rather a cause preexisting and surviving the body.

Personal experience has regularly shown that the soul is provided with a fluidic form, functioning as an inner, subtle organism from which it is inseparable. This imponderable organism, which has its own senses distinct from the corporeal ones, comes alone into play whenever the soul exerts its higher powers. Through it, in the course of a lifetime and during sleep, the soul can disengage itself from its physical envelope, pass through matter, cross spaces, and perceive the realities of the unseen world. From this fluidic form, emanations and radiations emerge which can be exteriorized, forming concentric layers around the human body [12] and, in certain cases, even be condensed to varying degrees, materializing to the point of impressing photographic plates, sensors and recording devices.[13]

The action at a distance of one soul on another takes place through telepathic and magnetic phenomena, thought-transference (thought-

transmission), and exteriorization of the senses and faculties. Thought vibrations can propagate in space, just like light and sound, and impress another fluidic organism in affinity with that of the manifesting individual. Psychical waves propagate far into the distance and then awaken impressions of varied nature in the physical envelope of a sensitive, depending their dynamic state: visions, auditory experiences or object displacements.

Sometimes the soul itself, during sleep, leaves its material envelope and, in its fluidic form, makes itself visible at a distance. Some apparitions were seen by several people at a time; others have exerted an action on matter, opened doors, moved objects, left traces of their passage. Some have even produced impressions upon animals.[14]

Apparitions of dying people have been observed thousands of times. The reports of the Society of Psychical Research, London, and the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, Paris, list a great number of these cases. Camille Flammarion, in his fine book *L'Inconnu et les Problèmes Psychiques*,[15] recounts a hundred cases with coincidence of death, which precludes them being attributed to mere hallucinations, as they are real facts with a relation of cause and effect.

Such phenomena have been so frequently observed and are backed by so many important testimonies, that even an extremely cautious scientist such as Mr. Charles Richet of the Academy of Medicine of Paris was led to say: "We encounter so many facts impossible to explain other than by telepathy, that we must admit there is some action taking place at a distance ... a fact which now seems proved beyond a shadow of doubt." [16]

In these phenomena we already can find a positive evidence of the soul's independence. If intelligence was indeed a property of matter, and was to be extinguished at death, one could not explain how it is not until the body collapses and the organism ceases to function, that intelligence sometimes manifests itself with redoubled intensity, in a surge of activity.

Cases of lucidity, clairvoyance, and foresight of the future are frequent among the dying. In these cases, the release from the physical envelope opens a new field of perception to the mind. The soul reveals itself at the moment of death, with faculties and qualities superior to those it possessed in normal life. This should be seen as a proof that our psychical personality is not a result of the organism closely bound to it, but that it rather enjoys a deeper life different from that of the body which, for it, is a temporary prison and a

hindrance.

This is demonstrated even more clearly when, after death, discarnate spirits can find in the physical envelopes of mediums all the elements necessary to materialize and be able to fall within the sphere of the senses.

By means of scales equipped with a recording gauge, it can be seen that the medium's body loses part of its weight, and this missing weight is found in the materialized apparition.[17]

Facts multiply upon us year after year, testimonies accumulate, the existence of the spirit world asserts itself with increasing authority and power. For half a century the study of the soul has shifted from the domain of metaphysics and pure concepts to that of experiments and observations.

Life is revealed as having two aspects: one physical, the other superphysical. Humans participate in two modes of being. With our physical body we belong to the seen world; with our fluidic body, to the unseen one. These two bodies coexist in us throughout our life. Death is their separation.

Above this material humanity there is another one which is unseen, composed of beings who have lived on Earth and were stripped of their fleshly garments. Above the living who have incarnated in a mortal body, these survivors pursue on the spiritual plane the free life of the spirit.

These two humanities are renewed by each other through birth and death. They pervade each other, mutually influence each other, and can come into contact with certain individuals that are endowed with special faculties, the so-called mediums. Each soul, whether incarnate or discarnate, emanates a force capable of inducing phenomena, which is called psychical force.

The existence of such a force has been confirmed by many experiments. Its effects can be seen in the raising of tables, the displacement of objects without contact, cases of levitation, etc. As for the action of the unseen, it is demonstrated in phenomena of direct writing; cases of so-called spirit incorporation; [18] materializations and temporary apparitions; spirit photographs and molds.

Materialized appearances were photographed in the presence of numerous witnesses: some examples are the spirit of Katie King in W. Crookes's presence, the spirits of Yolande and Leila at Madame d'Espérance's; and that

of Abdullah, impressed on the sensitive plate by Aksakof.[19]

Casting molds of footprints, hands, feet and faces, left in soft or pliable substances by materialized spirit forms, were collected by the German astrophysicist Johann Karl Friedrich Zöllner (or Zoellner), by Professors Wagner and William Denton, Doctors Wolff, Friese, and others. These molds, all in one piece, faithfully reproduced the inflexions of the limbs, the details of the structure, and any fortuitous alterations of the skin.[20]

This action is also manifested through phenomena of spirit “incorporation” (psychophony), such as those reported by Dr. Richard Hodgson in his study of Mrs. Leonore E. Piper's faculty.[21] The author, an avowed opponent of mediumship in all its forms, had begun his investigation with the intent of unmasking what he considered an imposture. He reported that he had extended his observations for a period of over twelve years in numerous sittings, during which a hundred and twenty invisible personalities had appeared, among them George Pellew, his childhood friend and, like him, a member of the Society for Psychical Research, who had died years before. These personalities revealed to him facts unknown to every living being on Earth. So, in the end, he concluded that survival of human personality had in fact been demonstrated beyond all possibility of a doubt. [22]

Dr. C. W. Elliott, President of the Harvard University, W. James, professor of psychology at the same university, W. R. Newbold, professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, together with other scholars and scientists, participated in these experiments and countersigned these statements.

In a more recent study,[23] Professor J. H. Hyslop of Columbia University, New York, spoke in the same breath about Mrs. Piper, whom he observed during many sittings. These were carried out in the utmost secrecy. The professor was introduced under the pretended name of Smith. He wore a mask covering his face, which would have prevented even his closest friend from recognizing him, and also abstained from uttering a single word, thus rendering Mrs. Piper or any other person unable to trace his identity through his voice.

It was in these conditions that Professor Hyslop obtained from his deceased relatives, through the organism of an entranced Mrs. Piper, narratives full of accurate details and peculiarities of their intimate life, that even he had forgotten. He concludes thus:

“ The evidence for personal identity in this record is so overwhelming, that when we dismiss fraud from consideration and reckon the mistakes and confusions in the favor of Spiritism instead of difficulties and objections, we should not naturally suspect telepathy as the most probable hypothesis in this case.” [24]

During the year 1900, from the very heart of these learned assemblies there came impressive testimonies in favor of Spiritism. It received considerable attention by the representatives of official science in the proceedings and debates of the 4th International Congress of Psychology, Paris.

On August 22nd, a plenary session of all sections was convened, devoted to the examination of psychical phenomena. One of the honorary presidents of the Congress, F. W. H. Myers, a lecturer at Cambridge, justly famous not only as an experimenter but also as a philosopher and a moralist, delivered a paper “On the trance phenomena of Mrs. Thompson.” [25]

After enumerating “a series of testimonies, from a large group of competent witnesses, who assert that facts have been uttered to them through Mrs. Thompson entranced which could not have become known to her in any normal way ... but most of the matter given suggests the character and the memory of certain deceased persons, from whom in fact the messages profess to come,” he concludes thus: “I claim that this *substitution of personality*, or *spirit-control*, or *possession*, or *pneumaturgy*, is a normal forward step in the evolution of our race. I claim that a spirit exists in man, and that it is healthy and desirable that this spirit should thus be capable of partial and temporary dissociation from the organism; itself then enjoying an increased freedom of vision, and also thereby allowing some departed spirit to make use of the partially vacated organism for the sake of communication with other spirits still incarnate on earth. I claim that much knowledge has already thus been acquired, while much more is to follow.”

In the fifth section of this Congress, three sessions were devoted to those same studies. Dr. Paul Gibier, director of the New York Pasteur Institute, Dariex, director of the journal *Les Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (also published in English as the *The Annals of Psychical Science*, London), along with Misters Encausse, Joire, Pascal, and others, either sent or presented personally very well documented papers establishing the reality of psychical phenomena and possible communication with the deceased.

An international institute for the study of psychical phenomena, including those of mediumship, was founded by the end of this Congress of Psychology. Among the members of its Executive Committee, we find the names of Dr. C. Richet (professor at the Faculty of Medicine of Paris and director of the journal *Revue Scientifique*), Col. Rochas d'Aiglun, C. Flammarion, Duclaux (director of the Institut Pasteur), Sully-Prudhomme, Fouillée, Bergson, Séailles, and others, representing France. As for other countries, some of the most outstanding luminaries in the field psychical science in Europe, such as W. Crookes, Lodge, Aksakof, Lombroso and Ochorowicz, have also joined it.

Other important testimonies in favor of Spiritism took place during the year 1900. Dr. Bayol, former governor of Dahomey,[26] related to the International Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress, gathered in September in Paris, a series of experiments in materialization ranging from the apparition of a luminous form to the casting in paraffin of the face of a spirit which he claims to be that of Acella, a young Roman girl, who died in Arles, France, at the time of the Antonines (second century AD). Doctors Bonnet, Chazarain and Dusart, all from the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, brought testimonies of the same nature and proofs of identity of spirits.[27]

Prof. Charles Richet of the Academy of Medicine of Paris, in a lengthy article entitled "Should Spiritism be seriously studied?" published in *The Annals of Psychical Science* (London, January 1905), acknowledged that, "There is ... no contradiction between classical science and that most extraordinary phenomenon of Spiritism, materialization. Materialization is a strange, unknown, unfamiliar phenomenon; but it is a phenomenon which contradicts nothing. And history [28] shows us that the science of the present day is constituted of facts which at one time appeared strange, unknown, and unfamiliar ... Inasmuch as science is unassailable when [it] establishes facts, so is [it] liable to error when she claims to establish negations."

Then Mr. Richet concludes in these terms:

"1. There is no contradiction between the facts and theories of Spiritism and the positive facts established by science.

2. The number of writings – books, memoirs, statements, notes, experiences – is so considerable, and seconded by authorities of such a nature, that it is not permissible to reject these innumerable documents without an impartial and serious preliminary study.

3· Contemporary science is, at present, so elementary by comparison with the knowledge which mankind will one day possess, that all is possible, even that which seems to us most extraordinary ...

Instead of seeming to ignore Spiritism, scientists should study it. Physicians, chemists, physiologists, philosophers, ought to take the trouble to know and understand the facts affirmed by Spiritists. A long and diligent study of the subject is necessary. It will certainly be fruitful ...”

Shortly after this article by Charles Richet, an important book appeared which had great repercussions throughout the world, namely: *Human Personality* [29] by Frederic W. H. Myers, a lecturer at Cambridge. It is a methodical and thorough study of Spiritist phenomena, supported by rich documentation and crowned with a philosophical synthesis, in which the vast consequences of psychical science are masterfully expounded.

Myers draws formal conclusions, such as:

“Observation, experiment, inference, have led many inquirers, of whom I am one, to a belief in direct or telepathic intercommunication, not only between the minds of men still on earth, but between minds or spirits still on earth and spirits departed.” [30]

In his book *Esprits et Médiums*,[31] Prof. Flournoy of the University of Geneva describes F. W. H. Myers’s work in these terms:

“Nothing permits one to foresee the end that the future reserves to the Spiritist doctrine of Myers. If future discoveries will come to confirm his thesis of the empirically verified intervention of the discarnate in the physical or psychological frame of our phenomenal world, then his name will be inscribed in the golden book of the great initiators, and join those of Copernicus and Darwin; he will complete the triad of geniuses having most profoundly revolutionized scientific thought in the cosmological, biological, psychological order.” [32]

In the years 1905, 1906, 1907 and 1908, the General Psychological Institute of Paris took the initiative of holding a large series of experimental sittings with the assistance of the medium Eusapia Paladino (or Palladino), and under the supervision of Misters Curie, Richet, d’Arsonval, Dubierne, and others. Despite being full of misgivings and reservations, the report made by the secretary of the Institute, Mr. Courtier, attests to the occurrence of phenomena of levitation and the displacement of objects without contact during these sittings. Every precaution was taken to prevent any possibility of

error or fraud. Special instruments were devised and used for mechanically recording the phenomena. A steadfast control was maintained throughout. Furthermore, the use of photographic equipment obviated any collective hallucination hypothesis.

No sooner had Mr. Dubierne mentioned during a sitting that "John" (Eusapia's spirit guide) was able to break the table, than they heard its foot break apart.

Eusapia could increase or decrease at will both her own weight and that of the table. At a distance of 45 centimeters, or 18 inches, she was able to cause the rupture of a rubber tube and that of a pencil. She broke a small wooden table into three pieces placed behind her chair, announcing in advance the number of pieces, which in itself was incomprehensible enough, since she was in the dark, sitting with her back to the table.[33]

Despite these facts, Dr. Lebon posed the following challenge to Spiritists and mediums in the May 29, 1908, edition of *La Matin*: "Although Professor Morselli declares that the raising of a table without contact is the ABC of Spiritist phenomena, I doubt very much that it has ever happened. I hereby offer 500 French francs [34] to the one who will show me this phenomenon in broad daylight."

"There are hundreds of us who have seen the phenomena of levitation of tables without contact. Yet we are told that it involves suggestion, conjuring and trickery. In imitation of Mr. Lebon, I offer 500 francs to the conjurer who will present himself in *L'Éclair*'s newsroom and deceive us with the alleged tricks by reproducing the same phenomena."

For his part, the astronomer C. Flammarion replied to Mr. Lebon in *Le Matin*: "You will find in my book *Unknown Natural Forces* direct and unretouched photographs, about which I am perfectly disposed to grant a reward of 500 francs to the one who can detect a single trick in them."

Further on, he added: "We see table turnings occur without contact, with flour having been spread over it with a bellows and no finger having touched it. In the course of these experiments, we saw a piano weighing 300 kilograms resounding and being raised from the floor, while next to it there stood only a child of eleven years of age, unaware of own mediumship."

Finally, Dr. Ochorowicz, a professor at the University of Warsaw, published in *The Annals of Psychical Science* throughout the year 1910, the report of his experiments with the medium Miss Tomczyk, accompanied by

photographic reproductions of many cases of noncontact levitation of objects. Such facts constitute a set of objective evidence capable of convincing even the most skeptical.

Professor Cesare Lombroso of the University of Turin, famous all over the world for his work as a criminal anthropologist, published in 1909, shortly before his death, a book called *Ricerche sui Fenomeni Ipnotici e Spiritici* [35] [Research on Hypnotic and Spiritist Phenomena] in which he described all his experiences carried out for many years, with a conclusion which most positively confirmed the Spiritist standpoint. This work is a fine example of scientific probity as opposed to the prejudices and routine views of most French scholars. We believe it necessary to reproduce here the considerations that led Lombroso to write it:

"When, at the close of a career ... in which I have figured as a champion of the new trend of human thought in psychiatry and criminal anthropology, I began investigations into the phenomena of Spiritism and afterwards determined to publish a book on the subject, my nearest friends rose against me on every side, crying, 'You will ruin an honorable reputation, ... and all for a theory which the whole world not only repudiates, but, worse still, thinks to be ridiculous.'" [36]

Therefore, day by day, experiments are repeated and testimonies become more numerous. As a whole, all these facts already constitute a new science based on the positive method. To build its tenets, modern Spiritualism[37] did not need to resort to metaphysical speculation; it was enough for it to rely on observation and experimentation. The phenomena which are object of study cannot be explained by known laws, so they were carefully studied and examined, and then, by linking them up in a rational manner, Spiritualism backtracked from effects to causes. The intervention of spirits, the existence of the fluidic body, and the exteriorization of the living were asserted only after thousands of facts were collected to demonstrate their reality.

The new Spiritualist science is therefore not a work of imagination, but rather the result of long and patient research, the fruit of numerous investigations. The individuals who undertook this initiative are well known in all scientific circles. They bear famous and respected names.

Investigations have been carried out for years by committees of professional scholars and scientists. Of these, the most well-known are the Dialectical Society of London; the Society of Psychical Research, which has lasted twenty years, having produced considerable results; and more recently, the one maintained by Mr. Flammarion. All of them have collected thousands of observations, subjected to severe scrutiny and to the most rigorous control.

Whatever part some exaggerations, frauds, and trickery, may have played in it, there is such a number of facts and proofs emerging from all these studies, that any friend of the truth can no longer remain indifferent or silent. The time for easy ironies has passed. Mockery is not a solution. Science must give a ruling on the matter; because the phenomena are there, taking on so many different aspects and multiplying at such rate, that they force themselves upon its attention. The soul, free and immortal, asserts itself, no longer as a vague and ideal entity, but as a real being associated with a form, and producer of a subtle force, whose constant manifestation solicits the attention of the researchers.

From table rapping with the simple facts of typtology [38] to materialized apparitions, Spiritist phenomena have taken place in increasingly powerful forms, bringing conviction even to the most skeptical and the most prejudiced.

Gone are the supernatural and the miraculous; instead, arising out of these same facts as old as humanity, which had been hitherto misunderstood and poorly observed, there now came a higher conception of life and the universe, and the knowledge of a supreme law that guides all beings in their ascent through the splendors of the Infinite, toward Good, toward Perfection!

II

The ascending march: Methods of study

The meeting of the International Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress, in Paris in 1900,[39] demonstrated the ever-increasing vitality of Spiritism. Delegates from all parts of the world, representing the most diverse nations, described the progress of the idea in their respective countries, its continuing ascent in spite of obstacles, the striking conversions effected among both churchmen and materialistic scientists. The same was true of the Brussels Congress in 1910. An international bureau was set up. Its aim is to establish permanent relations among groups of different countries, and to gather information on the Spiritist movement throughout the world.

Despite many scoffing denials, the Spiritist belief only grows greater and stronger. However, as it spreads, the struggle between converts and deniers becomes more intense. The old world is worried; it feels threatened. A fight for life is not fiercer than a struggle between ideas. The old, incomplete idea clings to desperate positions, resisting the efforts of the new idea, which wants to take its place in the sun. Resistance is explained by the interests of a whole order of things that finds itself shattered. Such opposition is nonetheless useful, as it makes innovators wise up, besides rendering more steady the progress of the human mind.

It is in the latter's destiny to constantly destroy and rebuild. It is forever striving to erect splendid monuments which will serve as its dwellings until they become insufficient and must then give place to broader constructions and conceptions, suitable to its constant development.

Every day, individualities vanish and systems collapse in this struggle. But in the midst of earthly fluctuations, the path of truth unfolds, traced by the hand of God, and humanity keeps moving toward its inevitable destinies.

Yesterday's utopia, Spiritism will become tomorrow's reality. Once familiarized with it, our successors will forget the struggles and sufferings of those who secured a place for them in the world. Yet in turn they will have to

fight and suffer for the triumph of an even higher ideal. This is the eternal law of progress, the law of ascension present in the human soul, step by step, from achievement to achievement, toward an ever greater sum of science, wisdom and enlightenment. Therein lies the very reason for life itself, the leading thought which directs the evolution of souls and worlds.

As Spiritism spreads, the need to determine precise rules and serious conditions for study and experimentation becomes more imperious. Adherents should be spared unfortunate disappointments, and all practical means of communication with the unseen world must be brought within the reach of everyone.

There are two means of acquiring the science of beyond the grave, namely: through experimental study on the one side, and through intuition and reasoning on the other, which only well-trained intellects can successfully put into action. Experimentation is preferred by the great majority of our contemporaries. It suits better the usual practices of the Western world, not yet well versed in the knowledge of the deep resources of the soul.

Well-established physical phenomena have an unparalleled importance for our scientists and scholars. In many individuals, doubt will not cease and thought will not come out of a torpid state unless there is some fact. Any brutal fact, any probative fact, will disrupt preconceived ideas. It forces the most indifferent to scrutinize the issue of the Hereafter.

While it is necessary to facilitate experimental research and the study of physical phenomena, they should be regarded only as conducive to less mundane manifestations. These latter, at the same time spiritual and intellectual, constitute the most important facet of Spiritism. In their various forms, they represent ways of teaching as well as methods of revelation on which the notion of future life is built, broader and loftier than any past conceptions.

Yet those who mourn for their loved ones, whom death has separated from them, seek above all a proof of survival in the manifestation of the souls of their nearest and dearest, also drawn by love for the consulters. An affectionate word, indeed any moral proof coming from those souls, will do more to convince them than all material phenomena put together.

Until now, most people’s belief in an afterlife had been but a vague hypothesis, a faith wavering under a hail of criticism. In their eyes, after

separating from their bodies, souls were nothing but ill-defined entities confined to restricted, idle, aimless spaces, without any possible rapport with humanity.

Nowadays we know with sure knowledge that the spirits of the dead surround us and interfere in our lives. They appear to us as genuine human beings, endowed with subtle bodies, and retaining all the sentiments they used to have on Earth, but also are susceptible of elevation, by having an increasing measure of participation in the work for universal progress, superior to the one they had in their former condition of life.

Now we know that death does not bring any essential change to one's innermost being, which remains what it has made of itself in all spheres, carrying beyond the grave its inclinations, its affections and its hatreds, its greatnesses and its weaknesses; still attached by feelings to those loved on Earth, and always anxious to approach them.

Deep intuition revealed the presence of our unseen friends and, to a certain extent, allowed us to keep in touch with them. Experimentation goes a step further. It provides us with a positive and accurate means of communication, establishing communion between the two worlds, the visible one and the hidden one, which will gradually expand as mediumistic faculties multiply and are refined. It strengthens the bonds which unite the two humanities, thus allowing them to pool their strengths and aspirations through constant relations and a continual exchange of views. By concentrating them on a single grandiose goal, they work together in order to achieve more enlightenment, moral elevation and, consequently, more happiness for the great family of souls, of which humans and spirits are members.

However, it must be admitted that experimental practice of Spiritism is full of difficulties. It requires qualities lacking in many individuals, such as methodical skills, perseverance, discernment, and elevation of thought and feeling. Some only arrive at certainty, which is their aim, after numerous failures. Others reach it with a single impulse of the heart, through love. They perceive the truth without effort, and henceforth nothing can divert them from it.

Indeed, science is beautiful. Persevering researchers find in it infinite satisfaction. Sooner or later it provides the foundation upon which solid convictions are built. But in order to balance this purely intellectual science, which studies only bodies, it is necessary to add another one which occupies

itself with the soul and its affective faculties. This is what Spiritism does, which is not only a science of observation, but also one of feeling and love, since it addresses both intelligence and emotion.

This is why official scientists, who are accustomed to positive experiments, while working with precision instruments and basing themselves on mathematical calculations, less easily succeed and get tired too quickly when confronted with the ephemeral nature of these phenomena. The joint action of multiple causes in this field, its uncertainties and disappointments, and the impossibility of replicating facts at will all disorientate and discourage scientists.

For a long time in French official circles, there have been some experimenters who are emancipated from classical routines and endowed with the qualities necessary to successfully carry out such delicate observations. All those who used an unbiased approach and persevered in their efforts were able to observe the reality of manifestations of the spirits of the deceased. However, once their research findings were published, they were frequently met with incredulity, indifference, or derision. In order to explain spiritual facts, scientists have piled up system upon system and resorted to the most improbable hypotheses, torturing the phenomena to fit them into the Procrustean bed [40] of their conceptions.

That is how we have seen so many strange theories emerge, from Jobert de Lamballe's "creaking nerve" and the so-called rattling joints, psychological automatism and collective hallucinations, to subliminal ones. Although these theories have been refuted a thousand times, they keep resurfacing over and over again. It would seem that the representatives of official science fear nothing so much as to be forced to recognize spirit survival and interventions.

It is undoubtedly prudent and wise to examine all contrary arguments, to exhaust all hypotheses and all other possible explanations, before resorting to the Spiritist theory. At first, most experimenters thought they could do without it, but as they examined the phenomena more closely, they realized that the other theories were insufficient, and that it was necessary to have recourse to the explanation which they had formerly disdained.[41] All other systems collapsed one by one under the pressure of facts.

In spite of all the difficulties, the number of conscientious investigators has gradually increased, whose minds are rather free and whose souls are high enough to place truth above all academic considerations and private interests. Day by day, we see daring scholars and scientists break with traditional methods and resolutely approach the study of phenomena. They have already succeeded in bringing telepathy, clairvoyance, premonition, and the exteriorization of forces into the domain of investigative science.

With Col. Rochas d'Aiglun, France holds a prime position in the study of exteriorization of sensibility. Societies of psychical studies have been founded everywhere. The skepticism of yesteryear has been diminishing. At certain times, a new breath seems to animate the old scientific organism.

Even so, we should not take anything for granted. Official scholars and scientists have yet to enter this field without restrictions. Mr. Duclaux, the great disciple of Pasteur, declared the following in his opening speech of the International Psychological Institute, on January 30, 1901:

"This institute will practice mutual criticism and have experience as its basis. It will admit a discovery as scientific only if it can be repeated at will."

What do these words mean? Can astronomical and meteorological phenomena be reproduced at will? Yet they are considered scientific facts. Then why these reservations and obstacles?

In many cases, a Spiritist phenomenon occurs with a spontaneity that defeats all prediction. We can only witness it. It imposes itself and escapes our control. Summon it and it hides itself; think no more of it and it reappears. Such is the case of almost all remote apparitions of living persons, and haunted house phenomena. Ghosts come and go, regardless of our demands and pretensions. You may wait for hours and nothing happens. Offer to leave and the manifestations begin.

With regard to unforeseen phenomena, let us recall what was said by Cromwell F. Varley, engineer-in-chief of the Post Office Telegraphs of Great Britain: [42]

"Mrs. Varley very frequently sees and recognizes spirits; especially is this the case when she is entranced. She is a very good trance medium, but I have little power over the occurrence of these trances; there is consequently nearly as much difficulty in investigating through her mediumship, as there is investigating that extraordinary, unexplained natural phenomenon ..."

It is therefore a false and fatal viewpoint to regard Spiritism as a domain in

which facts are always identical, and where the elements of experimentation lie at our disposal and discretion. This mindset only leads to pointless researches or incoherent results.

While applauding the movement that leads highly educated individuals toward the study of psychical phenomena, we cannot avoid harboring a certain fear that their efforts will remain sterile if they cannot get rid of their typical concerns. An example of this is Mr. Charles Richet, who is a sagacious and open-minded scientist. After having so often observed the phenomena produced by medium Eusapia Paladino, and having signed the minutes which attest to their authenticity, does he not admit himself that his own conviction, at first profound, had weakened and wavered some time afterwards, under the influence of mental habits contracted in the milieu with which he was familiar?

The public expects much from the new institute and the scientists who compose it. It is no longer a question of elementary psychology, but rather the highest issue that has ever been confided to human thought: the problem of destiny. Humans, tired of religious dogmatism and tormented by the need to know, turn their eyes toward science. They expect to hear the final verdict from it, which will allow them to focus their actions, establish their opinions and ground their beliefs.

Scientists have burdensome responsibilities. Can those who occupy the chairs of higher education feel all their weight, and be fully aware of their extent? Will they be willing to sacrifice their own small self-importance and retract their premature assertions? Or will they brace themselves, at the decline of their careers, for the sorrow and regret of realizing that they have missed the mark by disdaining the most essential things worth knowing and teaching?

As seen earlier, the psychical movement comes mainly from abroad, where it is intensifying on a daily basis. If French science refuses to take part in it, it will be outflanked and outstripped in the world, and its good reputation will pale in comparison. By renouncing its prejudices and keeping its methods in prudent balance, in response to foreign scholars, it must learn to rise to vaster and more subtle spheres, rich in discoveries. It is in its own interest, that these should be duly explored rather than negated!

Let Spiritism become a new science, which completes the other sciences by crowning them. These latter cover specific areas of nature. They

sometimes lead to false systems, and those who are confined to them often lose sight of the great horizons, the general truths. Psychical science should be the supreme science that teaches us to know ourselves, to gauge and enhance the powers of the soul, and to implement them, while it helps us in our ascent toward the eternal and divine soul.

III
Spirits and their Forms

In every human being there is a spirit.

By spirit, we mean the soul clothed in its fluidic envelope. This latter has the form of the physical body and partakes of the immortality of the soul, from which it is inseparable.

Of the essence of the soul we know only one thing – that since it is indivisible, it is imperishable. The soul is revealed by its thoughts and also through its actions; but in order for it to act and hit our physical senses, it needs a semi-material intermediate form, otherwise its action would seem incomprehensible to us. This intermediary is what we call the perispirit, which is the soul's invisible and imponderable fluidic envelope. The secret of Spiritist phenomena lies in the perispirit's action.

This fluidic body that dwells in every human being, is the transmitter of our impressions, our sensations and memories. Existing before this current life and surviving after death, it is the admirable instrument that the soul has constructed and shaped through time, being the result of its long past. In it are preserved the instincts, forces are accumulated, and acquisitions of our multiple existences are put together, gathering the fruits of our slow and painful evolution.

The substance that forms the perispirit is extremely subtle. It is matter in its most etherealized state, more rarefied than the ether. Its vibrations and movements surpass in swiftness and penetration those of the most active substances. Hence the ease with which spirits can traverse opaque bodies or material obstacles; and cross considerable distances at the speed of thought. [43]

Immune to all the causes of disintegration and destruction which affect the physical body, the perispirit ensures that life remains stable in the midst of continual cell renewal. It is the invisible template through which all the organic particles have to pass one after the other, following lines of force whose whole constitutes this design, this immutable plan recognized by the physiologist Claude Bernard as necessary to secure the human form through constant modifications and the renewal of atoms.

During sleep, the soul can disengage itself from its fleshly envelope as after death.[44] Its fluidic form may then be perceived by seeing mediums, in cases of apparitions of the deceased or of exteriorized living persons. During normal life, this form is revealed by its radiations, in phenomena where its sensibility and motivity are exerted from a distance. In the state of disengagement during sleep, the mind sometimes can act upon matter, producing noises and moving objects. Lastly, it can manifest itself after death, in various degrees of condensation, partially or totally materialized, or in photographs and casting molds, to the point of reproducing certain deformities.[45]

All these facts demonstrate that the perispirit is a comprehensive fluidic organism. During our earthly existence by grouping the cells, or elsewhere in the Hereafter with the aid of the psychical force borrowed from mediums, the perispirit makes up the transient or lasting forms of life on any given plane. It is it, rather than the material body, that provides the primordial and persistent type of the human form.[46]

Hector Durville, general secretary of the Magnetic Society of France, engaged in a series of very demonstrating experiments. These have established that, in phenomena of exteriorization, it is the double,[47] freed from the material body by magnetic action, that perceives all impressions, transforms them into sensations, and transmits them to the physical body by means of a fluidic cord which connects them until death.[48]

With the exteriorized double of a sleeping subject being separated from the material body and sent to another room, the following experiments have been made on sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste:

A newspaper article is read by the double and repeated by the sleeping subject in the next room. Similarly, objects and persons are perceived from a distance by the double and described by the subject.

The double hears the ticking of a watch as well as words spoken in a low voice close to him. A flask of ammonia is smelt by the double, after other odors or perfumes. The double tastes aloe, sugar, sulphate of quinine, orange, etc., and transmits the taste sensations to the body.

Finally, on the subject of touch, M. Durville expresses himself thus: [49]

“We know that nearly all subjects in the magnetic sleep are insensible; but we do not know whither the sensibility has transferred itself. When the subject is exteriorized, the sensibility always radiates around the body, at a

little distance from it; and if we pinch, burn or prick the sensitive zones, the subject feels sharp pain, though she feels nothing when we prick the body. It is the same in the projection of the double. The subject feels neither pricks nor pinches on the physical body; but she experiences a disagreeable and even painful sensation as soon as we touch the double or the connecting cord. This phenomenon has been verified at all the sittings [50]and with all the subjects without exception."

The human form, as told by the unseen, is that of all incarnate or discarnate spirits living in the universe. Yet this form, while rigid and compacted in the physical body, is flexible and compressible at will in the perispirit. To a certain extent it lends itself to the demands of the mind, allowing it, on the spiritual plane and according to the extent of its powers, to take on the appearances and put on the garments which used to be its own in the past, together with other attributes which make them recognizable. This is often observed in cases of apparitions. Once one's will is set, its action on spiritual fluids is considerable. An advanced spirit can subject subtle matter to countless metamorphoses.

The perispirit is a center of powers or forces. The magnetic force, which some individuals are able to give off in abundance; and which can influence, relieve, or cure, from near or afar; is one of its properties. The psychical force, which is indispensable for the production of spiritual phenomena, also has its seat therein.

The fluidic body is not only a receptacle of forces. It is also a living archive in which images and memories are recorded: all sensations, impressions and events, everything is stored and engraved therein. When conditions of intensity and duration happen to be too feeble, impressions fail to reach our consciousness; they are nevertheless recorded in our perispirit, where they remain latent. The same is true of facts connected with our past lives. The psychical being, when placed in a state of somnambulism,[51] partially disengaged from the body, is able to retrieve their sequence. This explains the phenomenon of memory.

The vibrations of the perispirit are weakened through the flesh. They

regain their amplitude as soon as the spirit disengages itself from matter and regains its freedom. Under the intensity of these vibrations, the impressions stored in one's perispirit reappear. The fuller the release from matter, the wider the range of memory. One's remotest memories awaken. The subject can then relive his or her past lives, as I have witnessed many times in my own experiments. Some people, plunged by a hidden influence into a state of somnambulism, were able to reproduce feelings, ideas, and long-forgotten actions of their present life, dating from their early youth. They could even relive scenes from their previous lives, using the language, the attitudes, and the opinions typical of the respective time and milieu.

In these cases one is left with the impression that another personality is being displayed, revealing a different individual.

These phenomena, poorly observed by some experimenters, have given rise to the theory of multiple personalities coexisting in the same envelope, each of them having its own character and memories. Onto this theory some have grafted the concepts of subliminal consciousness and the superior unconscious. In fact, it is always the very same individuality communicating under various guises, which it assumed throughout the centuries, and which it reinstates with all the more vividness because of a more powerful magnetic influence and a greater loosening of bodily bonds. Some experiments demonstrate this: for example, those of Professor Flournoy with the medium Hélène Smith, who, in a trance state, went back to one of her previous existences in the twelfth century, which had taken place in India.[52] Then there are those developed by Jacinto Esteva Marata and other Spanish experimenters with entranced mediums.[53] To these should be added more recent and extensive studies carried out by Colonel Rochas d'Aiglun.[54]

The degree of purity of its fluidic form testifies to the richness or indigence of the soul. Etherealized and radiant, it can rise to the divine spheres, participating in the most sublime harmonies. Opaque and dark, it falls back into the inferior regions, being riveted to the worlds of struggle and suffering.

Through their perispirit, humans plunge into the basest depths of nature

and have their roots in animality. Via their perispirit, humans also tend toward the worlds of light, where angelic souls abide, the pure spirits.

Our psychical state or condition is our labor; our degree of perception and understanding is the fruit of our long efforts. We are what we have achieved through the immense cycle of our lives. Our fluidic envelope, whether coarse or subtle, dark or radiant, represents our exact value and the sum of our acquisitions. Our actions, our persistent thoughts, the tightness of our will toward a goal, every volition of our mind, will have repercussions on the perispirit and, depending on their nature, whether base or lofty, generous or sordid, will expand and refine it, or make its substance denser and heavier. As a result, by constantly guiding our ideas, tastes, actions and aspirations in one direction or another, we gradually build up a subtle envelope, inhabited by beautiful and noble images and open to the most delicate sensations; or else, a dark dwelling, an obscure prison, where the soul, after death, is limited in its perceptions, lying buried as if in a tomb. Thus humans create their own good or evil, their joys and pains. Slowly, day by day, we build up our destiny. Our deeds are engraved in us, visible to all in the Hereafter. It is within these admirable inner workings, at once simple and grandiose, that the law of causality, or of consequence of actions, is put into action for both the world and its beings, which is none other than the accomplishment of justice.

These same causes cause humans to attract to themselves, in a lifetime, influences and ethereal radiations from above, or coarse emanations from spirits of passion and disorder. Therein lies the rule of Spiritist manifestations, which is none other than the very law of attraction and affinities. Depending on the degree of subtlety of our fluidic envelope and the intensity of its radiations, while we are disengaged, in ecstasy or even, for some, in retreat and meditation, we can come into contact with the unseen world, and either perceive echoes, draw inspirations, and glimpse the splendors of the celestial spheres; or suffer the influence of the spirits of darkness.

IV
Mediumship

All the manifestations of nature and life may be summed up in vibrations, which vary in speed and range according to the causes that produce them. In the universe, everything vibrates: sound, light, heat, electricity, magnetism, chemical rays, [55] cathode rays, radio waves, etc., which are only some of the various kinds of undulations and vibrations of the universal force and substance. As a whole, their successive degrees constitute the ascending scale of the manifestations of energy.

These degrees are quite distant from one another. Sound travels 340 meters per second, while light crosses 300,000 kilometers in the same time span. Electricity is propagated at a seemingly incalculable speed. However, our physical senses do not allow us to perceive all types of vibration. Since the fact that they are unable to give us a complete picture of the forces of nature is sufficiently well known, I will dispense with further details here.

In the field of optics alone, we know that light-waves impress our retina only within the range of the seven colors of the spectrum, from red to violet. Beyond or below these colors, solar radiation completely escapes our sight; so they are called dark rays.

As for sound frequencies, limits range between 24 and 60,000 hertz (i.e., one cycle per second); and of sensations of heat, which are measured by trillions of vibrations, we perceive nothing. The same is true of the sensation of heat and light, which corresponds on average to 500 trillion vibrations per second. [56]

On this prodigious ascent, our senses represent distantly spaced stages, stations placed at considerable distances apart on an endless road. For us, between these various stages – for example, between high-pitched sounds and the phenomena of heat and light, and then between these latter and the vibrational zones affected by cathode rays – there are gaps that seem like abysses. But would not these abysses, void and obscure in appearance, actually be filled with beings endowed with senses more subtle or more numerous than ours? Between the vibrations perceived by hearing and those

which impress the eyesight, is there nothing else to be found in the domain of forces and universal life?

It would make little sense to believe it, since everything that happens in nature is interconnected and unfolds, from link to link, through gradual transitions. Nowhere is there a sudden leap, a vacuum, a hiatus. What emerges from these considerations is simply the inadequacy of our organism, which is too poor to perceive all types of energy.

What was just said of the forces in action in the universe can also be applied to all beings and things, in their various forms and to their different degrees of condensation or rarefaction.

The extent of our knowledge about the universe is restricted or enlarged according to the number and refinement of our senses. Our current organism allows us to encompass only a very limited range in the realm of things. Most life forms escape our senses. But once a new sense is added to the existing ones, the unseen is immediately revealed, the void is crowded, our dull insensibility becomes animated.

We could even be in possession of different senses which, by their anatomical makeup, would completely change the nature of our present sensations, so that we could hear colors and taste sounds. This could be achieved by having in place of the retina a bundle of nerves connecting the base of the eyes to the ears.

In that case, we would be able to hear what we are seeing. Instead of contemplating the starry sky, we would perceive the harmony of the spheres, and our astronomical knowledge would be no less exact for that. If our senses were united, instead of being separated from one another, we would have only one general sense which would perceive at once the various types of phenomena.

These considerations, derived from the most rigorous scientific observations, make clear the insufficiency of materialistic theories. They want to base the edifice of laws of nature on experience gained through our current organism, whereas if provided with a better equipped, more perfect one, such experience would be quite different.

Indeed, by the mere modification of our organs, the world as we know it could be transformed and changed without the entire objective reality being in the least affected. Differently constituted beings could live in the same environment without ever seeing each other, or even knowing one another.

And if, due to the organic development of some of these beings in various appropriate environments, their means of perception would enable them to enter into contact with those others whose organisms are differently arranged, there would be nothing supernatural or miraculous in this action, just a set of natural phenomena subject to laws still unknown to the less knowledgeable of the two groups.

This is precisely what happens in our relations with the spirits of the deceased, in all instances where a medium can serve as an intermediate between the two humanities, the seen and the unseen. In Spiritist phenomena, two worlds whose organisms and recognized laws are different come into contact; and on this threshold, this frontier which used to separate them but now disappears, an eager thinker sees infinite perspectives unfold. He or she sees the elements of a science of the universe much larger and thorougher than the one we had in the past, although remaining a logical extension of it. This new science does not destroy the notions of the laws already known, but vastly broadens their horizons, for it traces for the human mind the sure path which will lead it to achieve the knowledge and acquire the powers necessary to carry out its present tasks and future designs.

I have just mentioned the role of mediums. The medium is the indispensable agent by means of whom manifestations of the unseen world take place.

Also noted was the impotence of our senses when applied to the study of life’s phenomena. The experimental sciences had to quickly resort to instruments in order to compensate for the weakness of the human organic senses and to enlarge our field of observation. It is thus that the telescope and the microscope have revealed to us the existence of things infinitely great and infinitely small.

At and above its gaseous state, matter is beyond our senses. Yet Crookes’s tubes and sensitive plates allow us to continue our studies in the long-unexplored field of radiant matter.

That is where, at least for now, scientific means of investigation end. Nevertheless, beyond that we can glimpse states of matter and forces which,

sooner or later, will become familiar to us through the use of improved equipment.

Where artificial means are still lacking, certain human beings have contributed their precious faculties to the study of vital phenomena.

It is thus that hypnotic subjects have been instrumental in enabling us to probe into the still mysterious depths of the human ego, and to undertake a minute analysis of all modes of sensibility, of all aspects of memory and will. Mediums, for their part, have come to play an essential role in the study of spiritual phenomena. Participating at the same time in spiritual life through their fluidic envelope, and in terrestrial life through their physical body, they are the required intermediaries between the two worlds.

The study of mediumship is therefore closely connected with all the issues involving Spiritism, being in fact its very key. The important thing in the examination of such phenomena is to distinguish between the part coming from the medium's own organism and personality and the one coming from an extraneous intervention; and then to be able to specify the nature of this intervention.

Once separated from coarse matter by death, a spirit can no longer act upon it, nor manifest itself in the human environment without the aid of a force, an energy which it borrows from the organism of a living being. Any person capable of supplying or exteriorizing this force can take part in physical manifestations, such as displacements of objects without contact, apports, [57] rappings, table turnings, levitations, and materializations. Currently, this is the most common and widespread form of mediumship. It requires no intellectual development, no moral advancement. It is a mere physiological property, which is found in people of all conditions. In all inferior forms of mediumship, the subject may be compared either to an energy accumulator, or to a telegraph or telephone apparatus transmitting the operator's thoughts.

This comparison is all the more exact as the psychical force is exhausted like all forces if left depleted. The intensity of the manifestations is directly proportional to the physical and mental state of the medium. It would be a mistake to regard him or her as a person affected with hysteria, or ill. A medium is merely an individual endowed with more extensive powers, or with perceptions more refined than any other's.

A medium's health seems to be one of this faculty's conditions. I know a

great number of mediums with perfect health. I have even noticed a very significant fact: when health deteriorates, the phenomena become weaker or even cease to occur.

Mediumship presents almost infinite varieties, from the most common forms to the most sublime manifestations. It is never identical in two individuals and diversifies according to character and temperament. At a higher level, it is like a light-ray from heaven brightening up human sorrow, dissipating the obscurities that surround us.

Physical effects mediumship is generally used by spirits of a vulgar order. It requires careful and sustained control. It is by means of intelligent effects mediumship, such as writing and inspiration, that we usually obtain the teachings of higher order spirits. To produce good effects, mediumship requires a rather extensive knowledge. The more educated and endowed with moral qualities is the medium, the more resources he or she can offer to the spirits. In any case, although the subjects function only as an instrument, they must be suitable to the role assigned to them. An artist, however skillful, cannot make the most of an incomplete instrument. The same is true of a spirit with regard to an intuitive medium, in whom sound judgment, clear intelligence, and even wisdom, should be essential conditions.

It is true that there have been subjects who can write in unknown languages or deal with scientific and abstract questions far beyond their reach. These are rare cases which require great efforts on the part of the spirits. These would rather have recourse to more supple intermediaries, perfected by study, capable of understanding them and of faithfully interpreting their thoughts.

In this order of manifestations, the unseen act on the subject’s intellect and project their ideas into his or her understanding. Sometimes those thoughts are mingled with the subject’s own. These spirits may assume a style and form expression in which the medium’s usual language and style are reproduced. Again, scrupulous scrutiny is required. However, it will be easy for an observer to discern, from the insignificance of numerous messages and the personal contribution of the subjects, the work of truly advanced spirits whose communications bear the stamp of greatness, beyond the possibilities of the medium.

At the various degrees of trance, one sees the psychical senses replace little by little the material senses. The means of perception and activity then

increase in proportions even more considerable as drowsiness becomes deeper and the disengagement of the perispirit more complete.

In this state the physical body can no longer perceive anything; it simply serves as a transmitter when the medium can still translate his or her sensations. This phenomenon is under way during partial exteriorization. In the waking state, under hidden influence, the fluidic envelope of the subject emerges and radiates in such a way that, while remaining firmly attached to the body, it begins to perceive things that escape our outward senses. This is the state in which clairvoyance or second sight, remote viewing through opaque bodies, spirit hearing, psychometry,[58] etc., take place.

At higher levels, in the state of hypnosis, exteriorization is accentuated until disengagement is complete. The soul, liberated from its fleshly prison, hovers over nature. Suddenly regained, its modes of perception enable it to encompass an enormous area and to move at the speed of thought. To this order of phenomena belongs the state of trance, which makes possible the “incorporation” (psychophony) of discarnate spirits into the medium’s envelope, which is temporarily available, as a traveler entering an uninhabited dwelling place.

The psychical senses, inactive in most people while in the waking state, can nevertheless be put to use. It suffices for this to remove oneself from material things, to shut out from one’s senses any noises, any external sights and, by an effort of will, to inquire into this profound sense in which all our higher faculties are summed up, which is usually called the sixth sense, intuition, or spiritual perception. It is through it that we may enter into direct contact with the spirit world, more easily than by any other means; for this sense is an attribute of the soul, the very foundation of its nature, and lies outside the scope of the material senses, from which it absolutely differs.

This sense, which is the most striking of all, has been hitherto misunderstood by science; and that is why the latter has remained ignorant of all that concerns the unseen world. The rules that it applies to the physical world will always be insufficient when trying to extend them to the spirit world. In order to penetrate this, we must first understand that we ourselves are spirits, and that we can only relate to the spiritual universe through the senses of the spirit.

V

The role and education of mediums

Nothing great can be achieved without effort. A slow and laborious initiation is imposed on those who seek the higher spiritual goods. Like all things, the formation and practice of mediumship are met with difficulties, as already pointed out many times. We find it necessary to warn and insist on this point, in order to put mediums on guard against false interpretations, and the causes of error and discouragement.

As soon as a subject's faculties, made supple by preparatory work, begin to yield results, this takes place almost always by means of contacts established with lower order spirits of the unseen world.

We are constantly surrounded by a crowd of spirits always eager to communicate with humans. This crowd is composed chiefly of less advanced souls, of irresponsible and frivolous spirits, sometimes evil ones, whose fluidic density keeps them chained to our world. Higher intelligent entities, subtle fluids and pure aspirations do not remain confined to our atmosphere after the disincarnation. They ascend higher, toward the regions that their degree of advancement assigns to them. It is true that they often descend and mingle with us to watch over loved ones, but only for a useful purpose, and in important cases.

As a result, beginners hardly ever receive anything but worthless communications made to please and trivial, sometimes containing unseemly answers which deter and discourage them.

In other cases, inexperienced mediums will receive, by paper and pencil or similar methods, [59] messages signed by famous names, containing apocryphal revelations which capture their confidence and fill them with enthusiasm. The invisible inspirer, knowing their weaknesses, flattering their self-esteem and their views, excites their vanity by overwhelming them with praise and promising them wonders. Such spirits turn them away, little by little, from all other influence, from all enlightened control, and lead them to isolate themselves in their labors. This is the beginning of an obsession, a monopolization which can lead the medium to deplorable results.

These pitfalls were pointed out by Allan Kardec from the very beginning of Spiritism; yet we still see, every day, mediums allowing themselves to be lured by suggestions of deceptive spirits and falling victim to mystifications, which render them ridiculous and reflect badly upon the cause they think to be serving.

A great number of disappointments and setbacks would be avoided if one understood that mediumship goes through successive phases and that, in its first period of development, the medium is assisted mostly by lower order spirits, whose fluids are still impregnated with matter and better adapted to the medium's own, and therefore suited to the initial phase of trial and error that befalls any faculty for longer or shorter periods of time.

It is only later, when the mediumistic faculty is sufficiently developed and supple, and the instrument more manageable, that highly evolved spirits may communicate and use it for intellectual and moral purposes.

This period of exercise, of preparatory work, sometimes so fertile in gross manifestations and mystifications, is therefore a normal phase in mediumistic development. It is a school where our patience and judgment are put to test, where we learn to familiarize ourselves with the modes of operation of the inhabitants of the Hereafter.

During this time of trial and error, and of elementary study, mediums must be on their guard, never abandoning a cautious reserve. They must carefully avoid idle or self-interested questions, jokes, everything that may have a flippant character and attract frivolous and irresponsible spirits.

We must not let ourselves be discouraged by the mediocrity of the first results, or by the apparent indifference and abstention of our friends in the spirit world. Beginner mediums, rest assured that one watches over you, that your perseverance is being put to the test. When you have reached the desired point, higher influences will descend upon you and proceed with your psychical education.

Do not seek mediumship for mere curiosity or pure amusement, but instead consider it a gift from heaven, a sacred thing which you must use with respect for the good of your fellow beings. Raise your thoughts to those generous souls that work for the progress of humanity. They will come to you, support and protect you. Thanks to them, the difficulties of the beginning, the inevitable disappointments you all have been through, will have no untoward consequences. They will illuminate your reason and

develop your fluidic forces.

A good mediumship is slowly formed in quiet, silent and serene study, away from worldly pleasures and human passions. After a period of preparation and waiting, mediums can reap the fruit of their persevering efforts, by receiving from higher order spirits the consecration of their faculties, ripened in the sanctuary of their souls and devoid of suggestions of pride. If they keep in their hearts purity of intention and action, they will eventually become, with the assistance of their spirit guides, useful cooperators in the regeneration work that is being carried out by the highly evolved spirits.

As soon as the first stage of development of their mediumistic faculties is concluded, the important thing for every medium should be to ensure that they are receiving the protection of a good, evolved spirit guide that can inspire them as well as preserve them from all danger.

Most often, it is a deceased relative or friend that fills this role next to the medium. If they have gained the necessary advancement and experience, a parent, spouse or child can guide one through the delicate practice of mediumship. Yet their power is measured against their degree of elevation; and their solicitude and tenderness are not always enough to preserve the medium from the actions of lower order spirits.

We must praise those mediums who, on account of their profound faith and total selflessness, have been able to attach themselves to spirits of higher degree and participate in their mission. In order to extract these spirits from their joyous regions and convince them to plunge into our thick atmosphere, one must submit remarkable qualities and aptitudes to them.

Moreover, their ardent desire to work in the task of reforming the human race makes their intervention much more frequent than might be supposed. Hundreds of higher order spirits hover above us and direct the spiritualist movement, by inspiring and controlling the mediums, and spreading the vibrations of their will and the radiance of their genius over mediumistic groups and people of action.

I myself know of several groups that receive such assistance. By means of the pen, and from the lips of mediums, the Guiding Spirits dictate their instructions and make their exhortations heard. And despite the imperfections of the surroundings, in spite of the shadows which weaken and veil the radiation of their thoughts, it is always a tender delight, a joy of one's heart,

and a comfort to one's soul to be able to enjoy the beauty of their written teachings, and hear the accents of their voices, which reach us as a distant echo of celestial spheres.

Their descent onto our earthly world is an act of abnegation and a cause of suffering for highly-evolved spirits. We cannot admire enough or recognize fully enough the generosity of these souls that do not recoil from contact with coarse fluids, similarly in this respect to some noble, charitable women who, despite being delicate sensitives, enter disgusting environments in order to bring relief and consolation.

Countless times have I heard our spirit guides say during sittings of studies: “ When we descend all the way from the spiritual realm down to you on Earth, everything becomes restricted and narrowed, and gradually shrinks. Up there we have means of action beyond your comprehension. These means are weakened as soon as we come into contact with the human environment.”

As soon as one of these great spirits descends to our level, as soon as it dwells in our obscure regions, an impression of sadness invades it. It feels like a weakening, a lessening of its powers and perceptions. It is by a constant exercise of its will and with the help of magnetic forces drawn from the spiritual plane, that it becomes accustomed to our world and pursues the accomplishment of the missions assigned to it.

For everything is regulated in the providential work of gradually enlightening and advancing humanity. These missionary spirits and instructors come by means of our mediumistic faculties to reveal the truths that we are able to grasp and understand at our current level of evolution. They develop in the terrestrial environment high and pure conceptions of divinity. They lead us step by step toward a broader understanding of the purpose of human existence and destiny. We must not expect from these spirits trivial proofs, such as demonstrations of identity, which so many experimenters demand. But our conversations with them leave upon our minds an impression of grandeur and moral elevation, irradiating purity and charitable love, which far surpasses any material evidence and amounts to the highest moral proof.

Higher order spirits can read through us. They know our intentions and take little notice of our caprices and fantasies. In order to respond to our summons and render assistance, they require a firm, sustained will, a high

faith, and an ardent desire to make ourselves useful. When these conditions are all met, they draw nearer to us. A prolonged work of adapting their fluids to ours then starts, often without our knowledge. These are the necessary preliminaries of any conscious interchange. As vibrations are harmonized, spirit communications develop in forms appropriate to the subject's abilities: seeing, hearing, writing, or speaking mediumship.

Unwilling to cater to material and self-interested views, higher order spirits are pleased with people who seek in their studies a means of improving themselves. The purity of our feelings will increase their influence and facilitate their action.

Spirits of lesser rank, in the devotion of their hearts, attach themselves to us and follow us until the end of our earthly pilgrimage. These are our familiar or guardian spirits. Every person has one. They guide us in the midst of trials with admirable patience and kindness, without ever getting tired. Mediums must resort to the protection of these invisible friends – almost always advanced members of our spiritual family – with whom we once lived in this world. They have accepted the sometimes ungrateful task of watching over us. Through our joys and sorrows, our falls and recoveries, they lead us to a better life, where we will be reunited and strive for the same goal, pursuing the same love.

Every human being has rudiments of mediumship, the germ of faculties which can be developed through practice. For the great majority of individuals this would require long and persevering work. Yet, for some, these faculties appear from childhood and are attained without effort, reaching a high degree of perfection as the years pass by. In this case, they are the result of previous achievements, the fruit of their past work on the Earth or on the spiritual plane, which they brought with them when they were reborn.

Many are those among sensitives who possess an intuition of a superior plane beyond physical Earth, where there are powers as if kept in reserve,

that they may acquire through inner communion and lofty aspirations, in order to later manifest them in different forms according to their nature, such as, divination of the future, teaching, healing action, etc.

It is taken in this sense that mediumship becomes a precious faculty, through which great aid can be rendered, great works can be accomplished.

It would become a powerful means of renewal for mankind, if everyone understood that there is above us an inexhaustible source of nourishing force and spiritual life, which can be attained by gradual practice, by constantly focusing one's thoughts and will in order to pick up their waves and radiations, and develop our latent faculties with their help.

The acquisition of these forces guards us against evil. It elevates us above material conflicts and makes us adhere more firmly to our duty. No earthly good is comparable to possessing these gifts. When carried to their highest degree, they make great missionaries, reformers, and greatly inspired individuals.

How can we acquire these powers, these superior faculties? By opening up our souls, through will and prayer, to the influences from above. It all depends on us and our state of mind. Just as we open the doors of our home to allow the sun's rays to come in, so should we open our inner being, through our impetus and aspirations, to the heavenly emanations.

It is here that the beneficent action of prayer is revealed. Through prayer, whether short, humble or fervent, the soul is able to expand and open itself to the radiations of the divine hearth. To be effective, a prayer must not be a banal recitation or a learned formula, but rather an appeal from the heart, an act of will that can attract the universal fluid and vibrations of divine dynamism. Or, again, one must project one's soul, exteriorizing oneself with a powerful impetus and, following the impulse given to it, enter into communication with the ethereal worlds.

Thus prayer forms a fluidic path along which human souls can ascend and higher souls descend, in such a way that communion is established between one and the other, and the human spirit is enlightened and fertilized by the rays and forces coming from heavenly spheres.

In Spiritism, the issue of educating and training mediums is crucial. It is

often said that good mediums are scarce and that the science of the unseen, deprived of means of action, can only progress slowly.

However, how many precious faculties have been lost for lack of attention and research; how many mediums squandered in frivolous experiments, or who, by indulging the whims of consulters, attract only pernicious influences and produce only bad fruit! How many mediums, unaware of their role and the value of the faculty given to them, have left unused those forces capable of contributing to the work of human renovation!

Mediumship is like a delicate flower that, in order to blossom, needs careful precautions and constant attention. It also requires method, patience, high aspirations, and noble sentiments. Above all, it calls for tender concern by a good spirit that can surround the medium with its love and vivifying fluids. However, what we do see most of the time is the yielding of overhasty fruits and, from then on, the erosion and drying out of one’s mediumship under the breath of backward spirits.

In antiquity, young subjects displaying special aptitudes were removed from the world and placed beyond the reach of any degrading influences in places devoted to worship, and surrounded by everything that could elevate their thoughts and hearts, and develop in them the sense of beauty. Such was the case with the virgin vestals, the sibyls, the druidesses, and others.

It was the same in the schools of prophets and seeing mediums of Judea, located far away from the noise of town life. In the silence of the desert, in the peace of mountain peaks, the initiates knew how to draw higher influences to themselves, and how to interrogate the unseen. Thanks to this education, they arrived at results that still surprise us.

Such methods cannot be applied today. Social requirements will not always allow mediums to devote themselves as well as they should to the cultivation of their faculties. They have their attention diverted by the thousand necessities of family life, and their aspirations hindered by the contact with a more or less frivolous, or corrupt, society.

Often they are summoned to exercise their abilities in environments that are heavily impregnated with impure fluids and filled with inharmonious vibrations, which react upon their impressionable organisms causing trouble and disorder.

At the very least, all the mediums that are suffused with the idea of service and grandeur of their role should apply themselves to study, and so broaden

their knowledge, while striving to spiritualize themselves to the fullest extent. May they set some hours apart for meditation and then, with inner vision, try to reach to divine things, even to eternal and perfect beauty. The more they develop their intelligence, knowledge and moral qualities, the more will they be able to act as intermediaries to the great souls of the spiritual plane.

A practical organization of Spiritism might in future entail the creation of special retreats, where mediums will find, along with material means of existence, satisfactions of heart and mind, inspirations of art and nature, in short, everything that can impart a character of purity and elevation to their faculties, while spreading around them an atmosphere of peace and confidence.

Experimental studies carried out in such environments would produce far better results than have so far been obtained under defective conditions. Intrusions by frivolous and irresponsible spirits, inclinations to fraud, selfish thoughts and malicious feelings would gradually subside and eventually cease altogether. Mediumship would become steadier, more accurate in its applications. Sensations of uneasiness experienced by the subjects, periods of suspension of their psychical faculties, causing even the total disappearance of these due to misuse, would no longer occur so frequently.

Some overseas spiritualists are considering creating in several great American centers retreats or buildings with a certain number of rooms adapted to the different kinds of manifestations and equipped with apparatuses to carry on experiments and control procedures. Each room, impregnated through use with specific magnetism suited to each type of experiment, would be assigned to a special order of phenomena: materialization, “incorporation,”[60] mediumistic writing, typtology, etc. An organ, installed at the center of the building, would be piping music with powerful vibrations to all its quarters, during seance times, in order to establish the necessary unity and harmony between the fluids put into action and the minds of the sitters. Music, in fact, exerts a sovereign influence on spirit manifestations, by facilitating and intensifying them, as recognized by many experimenters.

We cannot but approve of these views and wish them to be implemented in every country. They would provide a vigorous impulse for the development of psychical studies and greatly facilitate communion between the living and the dead, through which so many truths of incalculable value

have been affirmed, which are capable of renewing science and faith, while being spread around the world.

As said above, the important thing for the medium, is to ensure effective protection for himself or herself. Help from above will always be proportionate to the purpose we set for ourselves, and to the efforts we make to deserve it. We are helped and supported according to the importance of the tasks entrusted to us in the general interest. These tasks involve trials and inevitable difficulties, but always within the limits of our strengths and aptitudes.

If accomplished with devotion and self-denial, our tasks can raise us up in the hierarchy of souls. If neglected, unrecognized or unrealized, they make us go down the progress scale. Everything entails responsibilities. From the father who inculcates his dear little ones with elementary notions of good, to the educator of youth, the moralist writer, even the orator who seeks to draw crowds to the summits of thought, they all have a mission to fulfill.

There is no nobler or greater honor than to be called to spread, under the inspiration of the unseen powers, the truth in the world; to make our fellow beings hear the pale echo of divine summons, inviting them all to ascend toward light and perfection. Such is the role of high mediumship.

Accountability was mentioned above. It is necessary to insist on this point. A great many mediums seek in the application of their faculties satisfactions of their self-love or interest. They neglect to impart to their labor this solemn, reflective, almost religious feeling, which is one of the conditions of success. Too often they forget that mediumship is one of the means of action by which the divine design can be executed, and that they have no right to dispose of it according to their fancy.

So long as mediums continue to ignore the importance of their role and the extent of their duties, there will be a source of abuse and evil in the exercise of their faculties. Once diverted from their major purpose, psychical gifts used for mediocre, personal and vain interests, will turn against their own bearers, drawing to them, instead of tutelary spirits, the evil powers of the Hereafter.

When elevation of thought, morality and selflessness are absent,

mediumship can become dangerous. But with a steady willingness to do good and aspirations toward the divine, mediums can be suffused with purified fluids forming a protective atmosphere around them. It envelops and secures them from the errors and traps of the unseen.

And if, by their zeal and faith, and the purity of their souls where no interested motive may slip in, each medium obtains the assistance of one of those Spirits of Light – holders of the secrets of the spirit plane, hovering above us and radiating over our weaknesses – and this spirit becomes the medium's protector, friend and guide, then such medium will feel an unknown force penetrate his or her whole being, a flame illuminating their foreheads. All those who participate in this work and gather its fruits will feel their intelligence and their hearts warm up under the radiations of a higher soul. A breath of life will convey their thoughts into the higher regions of the infinite.

VI

Communion between the living and the dead

Some people mistakenly regard mediumship as a phenomenon peculiar to modern times. In reality, mediumship is of all ages and countries. From ancient times, relations have existed between the world of the living and the world of spirits.

If we check the Vedas of India, the temples of Egypt, the mysteries of Greece, the stone walls of Gaul, the sacred books of all peoples everywhere, in written documents, monuments and local traditions, we shall find the affirmation of a fact which has endured through the vicissitudes of time. This fact is the universal belief in manifestations of the souls of those delivered from their earthly bodies. We see such manifestations tightly and constantly mingled with the evolution of the human races; so much so that they are inseparable from human history.

It started with the worship of the ancestors, the homage paid to the manes of the heroes and the *lares,* Roman tutelary geniuses of the household. Altars were erected to them, with invocations addressed to them. Then worship extended to the souls of the nearest and dearest: a spouse, a child, a deceased friend. According to Lucan,[61] the shadows of the dead mingle with the living. They slip into our streets and into our homes. They appear, they speak, during wake or sleep, and unveil the future. Telepathy, premonition, direct writing, the materialization of ghosts, abound always and everywhere.

At Delphi, at Eleusis, a spirit inspires the quivering Pythia and dictates her oracles. On the shores of Ionia, under the whiteness of marble statues and colonnades, with the blue waves murmuring around, Pythagoras taught the divine mysteries to initiates, and conversed with the invisible genii through the mouth of the entranced priestess Theoclea.

At Endor, the shadow of Samuel responded to Saul’s summons. A genius warned Caesar, on the eve of his death, not to go to the Senate; and later, when Domitian falls under the conspirators’ swords, Apollonius of Tyana

watches the bloody drama in a vision, at the other extremity of the Empire.

In the stone circles of Gaul, under the somber vault of the oak trees, on the sacred islands around which the ocean roars and foams, or even in the temples of Central America, the communion of souls was practiced. Everywhere the living inquired of the dead, and the dead responded.

There is not doubt that abuses, puerile superstitions, and superfluous sacrifices were mingled with the worship of the Unseen. Yet, from this intimate relationship, humans were able to derive new forces. They knew they could count on the presence and support of their departed loved ones. This certainty strengthened them in their trials, as it taught them to no longer fear death.

Family ties are thus tightly knotted. In China, in India, in the Celtic nation, people used to meet on a fixed day in the " room of the ancestors." Mediums were numerous, their faith lively, their faculties varied and powerful, and the phenomena obtained surpassed in intensity all that we see today.

In Rome, public ceremonies were instituted in honor of the dead. They went in crowds to the entrance of some cave. The sibyls then proceeded with their incantations until, from the darkness of the grotto, as told by the writers of the time,[62] just like in today's materialization cabinets, there emerged spirit shadows springing to light. Sometimes even companions, friends from the past, would briefly resume their place at the communal table and hearth.

According to Porphyry and Proclus,[63] during the Orphic Mysteries, the souls of the deceased appeared in human form and conversed with those present. They taught them of the succession of existences and the final ascension of the spirit in the divine light through pure and laborious lives. To the initiates, these conversations imparted a deep faith in the future. They provided them with an incomparable moral force and serenity. They draw their thoughts toward the sublime regions in which the ancient Greek genius used to be well pleased.

But then came the period of decadence, with the debasement of education, the priestly intrigues, the rivalries of the powerful and, finally, the great invasions, which led to the ruin and collapse of the gods.

The sacred mysteries were swept by barbaric winds. The spirits, their tutelary genii, fled away. The divine Psyche, banished from its altars, ascended back to the celestial spaces. One by one, the lights of the temples went out. The long night, a night of ten centuries, fell down on human

thought.

However, Christianity had come. It also relied on manifestations beyond the grave. Christ walked in his lifetime surrounded by an unseen crowd, whose presence was revealed in all his actions. He himself appeared after his death, to the dismay of his disciples, and his presence renewed their courage. For two centuries the first Christians would communicate openly with the spirits of the dead and receive instructions from them.[64] But then the Church, alarmed at these occult interferences, which were often in opposition to its own views, sought to prevent them. It would soon forbid the faithful to communicate with spirits, reserving to itself the exclusive right of inducing and interpreting phenomena.

Yet the religion of Christ brings with it a new notion, namely, the usefulness of pain, a beneficent and purifying “deity,” whose role the pagan world had not fully understood. Through it the soul can struggle more successfully against matter and overcome sensuality. This struggle lasts throughout one’s life, its goals being the triumph of the mind over the body, and the conquest of virtue. A few clerics and laymen were able to acquire the power of faith, which dominates the senses and lifts the soul above the earthly regions, toward the spheres where thought expands and exalts itself.

This is another means of penetrating into the unseen. The soul, detached from human things, in contemplation and ecstasy, communicates with the higher powers and lends them the angelic or divine forms familiar to its belief. These phenomena, which resulted from a simple law of nature, would be appropriated by the Church, which regarded them as miracles. Other manifestations of the dead were considered diabolical and led the seeing mediums to punishment. By burying it under the ashes of blazing pyres, they tried to extinguish the reborn idea.

But the spirit “blows where it wills.” Outside the Church, among the heretics, the manifestations continued. With Joan of Arc, they would assume such a character of grandeur that, before them, even the most malicious criticism would hesitate, and then be disarmed and silenced.

Times have changed. In the past, the communion of souls was above all

the privilege of the sanctuaries, the concern of a few groups of initiates. Outside these enlightened circles, refuges of ancient wisdom, the manifestations from beyond the grave were too often regarded as supernatural and mingled with superstitious practices which distorted their meaning. Humans, ignorant of the laws of nature and of life, could not yet grasp the teaching hidden under the phenomena.

To prepare the current movement of ideas and the understanding of those facts, it took an immense work of centuries and the discoveries of science. This latter has done its job. Though still incomplete, it has at least explored the domain of matter, from the deep layers of the soil up to the immensity of space. It told us Earth's history, its genesis, its evolution. It counted the worlds which gravitate in sidereal space, and calculated their weight, their dimensions, their motion. Humans have realized how little space they occupy in the universe. If on the one hand we have come to know the greatness of our intelligence, on the other we have been able to measure the weakness of our senses.

Life has revealed itself everywhere, from the domain of microscopic beings to the surface of the globes which rotate across the expanse of space. The study of the unseen world has come to complete this ascent of science. It opens up new horizons, infinite perspectives to the mind. Henceforth, the knowledge of the souls and their destinies will no longer be the privilege of the sages and initiates. Humanity as a whole is called to participate in the spiritual goods that make up its heritage. Just as the sun rises for all eyes, so should the light of the afterlife radiate over all intelligent beings, warming their hearts.

VII
Spiritism and women

There are excellent mediums of both sexes; yet, it is on women that the most beautiful psychical faculties seem to be devolved. Hence their great role in the spreading of the new Spiritualism.

Despite imperfections inherent in every human being, women, to those who have studied them impartially, can only cause amazement and sometimes wonder. It is not only in their personal traits, that the forms of beauty, compassion and charitable love are realized in nature as in art. When it comes to inner powers, intuition and divination, women have always been superior to men. It is among them that antiquity has found its famous clairvoyants and sibyls. These marvelous powers and gifts from above were stifled and suppressed by the Church in the Middle Ages, by means of trials for witchcraft and sorcery.[65] Such faculties have lately regained their usefulness, since it is especially through female mediums that communion with the unseen life has been affirmed.

Once again, women reveal themselves in their sublime role as mediators. Mediators, this is what they are in all nature. From them comes life, they are its very source; also as regenerators of the human race, which subsists and is renewed only by their love and tender care. And this prevailing role they play in the realm of life, is similarly fulfilled by them in the realm of death. Yet we know that death and life are one, that is to say, the two alternating forms, two continuous aspects of existence.

As mediators, women also participate in the field of beliefs. They have always served as intermediaries between the new faith which rises and the old faith which declines and becomes impoverished. This was their role in the past, in the early days of Christianity; this is still their role today.

Catholicism failed to understand women, to whom it owed so much. Its monks and priests, living in celibacy, far from the family, could not appreciate the charm and power of this delicate being, in whom they rather saw a threat.

Pagan antiquity had its superiority over us, in that it knew and nurtured the

feminine soul. Their faculties flourished freely in the mysteries. A priestess in Vedic times, at the domestic altar, mingled themselves closely, also in Egypt, Greece and Gaul, with the ceremonies of worship. Everywhere the woman was the object of an initiation, of a special teaching, an almost divine being, the protective fairy, the genius of the home, the guardian of the sources of life. It is to this understanding of the role of women, personified in their nature, and with their deep intuitions, subtle sensations and mysterious divinations, that the beauty, the strength and the epic grandeur of the Greek and Celtic peoples are due.

Because, like mother, like child, and so later will the adult be alike. It is the woman who, from the cradle, shaped the souls of generations. She it was who had made all these heroes, these poets and artists whose actions and works radiate through the centuries. Up to the age of seven the child remained under the mother's custody in the gynaeceum (the women's quarters in a household). And we know what Greek, Roman, and Gaulish mothers represented. But in order to accomplish the sacred mission of education, it was necessary for them to be initiated in the great mystery of life and destiny, and to know the law of preexistence and reincarnation. For this law alone can give the coming of the soul, that is about to hatch under the maternal wings, so touching and beautiful a meaning.

This beneficent influence exerted by initiated women, which had shone upon the ancient world as a gentle light, was somehow destroyed by the biblical legend of an original sin.

According to the Scriptures, a woman is responsible for the degradation of man. She causes the fall of Adam and all humankind with him; she betrays Samson. A passage from Ecclesiastes declares that she is "something more bitter than death" (Eccl 7:26 *ESV*). Marriage itself seems an evil: "Let those who have wives live as though they had none," cries Paul (1Cor 7:29).

In this respect, as in so many others, Jewish tradition and mindset prevailed in the Church over the views held by Jesus Christ, who had always been benevolent, helpful and affectionate to women. In all circumstances, he covered them with his protection and addressed his most touching parables to them. He had always held his hand out to them, even when wilted and fallen. So, to show their gratitude, women formed a sort of entourage around him; and many of them accompanied him till the day of his death.

Thus, for many centuries, the female gender was relegated to the background, lowered and excluded from priesthood. Through a puerile, narrow and superstitious education, women were surrounded by restraints; their finest aptitudes were compressed and obscured, their genius repressed. [66]

The situation of women in our civilization is difficult, sometimes even painful. A woman does not always have laws and customs to defend her; she is surrounded by a thousand traps and, if she weakens and succumbs, there is seldom a helping hand coming to her rescue. The laxity of manners has made women victims of the times. Destitution, tears, prostitution, and suicide, this is the fate of many unfortunate female humans in our opulent societies.

A reaction has occurred. Under the name of feminism, a movement has been imposing itself, legitimate in its principles, exaggerated in its aims; for, besides its fair demands, it affirms views which would make the woman, no longer a woman, but a copy, a parody of man. The feminist movement ignores the true female role and tends to remove women far away from their normal and natural conduct. Both men and women were born for different but complementary roles. From the point of view of social action, they are both equal and inseparable.

Modern Spiritualism, which by its principles, practices and philosophies, is all made of ideals, love and equality, regards this issue differently, solving it effortlessly and quietly. It gives the woman her true place in the family and in social work, showing her the sublime role that she is called on to play in the education and advancement of humanity. It does even more than that. Through it, she becomes again the predestined mediator, the connecting link between the societies of the Earth and those of the spirit world.

Women’s great sensitivity makes them mediums par excellence, capable of expressing and translating the thoughts, emotions, and sorrows of the souls, and the divine teachings of the celestial spirits. In the application of her faculties she finds deep joy, a living source of consolation. The religious side of Spiritualism attracts and fulfills the aspirations of her heart, her needs for tenderness, which extend beyond the grave to departed loved ones. The pitfall for her, as for men, is the pride deriving from the acquired powers, and her extreme susceptibility. Jealousy, by provoking rivalries among mediums,

often causes mediumistic groups to disband.

Hence the necessity for women to develop, at the same time as their intuitive powers, their admirable moral qualities, the forgetfulness of themselves, the joy of sacrifice; in a word, a high sense of the duties and responsibilities attached to their mediating task.

Materialism, seeing in us only a physical organism, turns women into lower beings through their weaknesses, and leads them toward sensuality. Through it, this veritable flower of poetry bends beneath the weight of degrading influences, feeling depressed and being debased. Deprived from her mediating role with its pure aureole, she becomes a slave of the senses and no more than an instinctive, impulsive being, open to all sorts of suggestions of unhealthy love. Mutual respect and the strong domestic virtues disappear; misunderstanding and adultery creep into one's home. The family dissolves, happiness vanishes. A skeptical and disenchanted young generation emerges from the bosom of a decadent society.

However, with Spiritualism, women can lift up their inspired foreheads. They are closely associated with the work of social harmony and with the general movement of ideas. One's body is only a borrowed form; the essence of life is the spirit and, from this standpoint, men and women have equal shares. Thus, modern Spiritualism takes up the views of our fathers, the Celts,[67] and establishes the equality of the sexes on the identity of the psychical nature and the imperishable character of the human being. It gives them equal status in mediumistic groups.

Through Spiritualism, women's condition emerges from the abyss of the senses and ascends to the higher life. Her soul is illuminated by a purer ray; her heart becomes the center of tender sentiments and noble passions. She resumes her mission at home, full of grace, compassion and devotion; and her great and divine role as mother, sister, educator, and sweet counselor.

From then on, the struggle of both sexes comes to an end. The two halves of humanity are united, balancing each other with love, so as to jointly contribute to God's providential plan and the works of Divine Wisdom.

VIII
Laws of spirit communication

We know that everything vibrates and radiates in the universe, for everything is life, force, and light. Nature, even in its tiniest atoms, is penetrated by infinite energy which is the source of all phenomena. Likewise, each spirit, whether free or incarnate, has a radiance which is increasingly intense, swift, and luminous, depending on the spirit's level of advancement and purity.

The law of attraction and correspondence governs all things. Vibrations, attracting similar vibrations, bring together and unite hearts, thoughts, and souls.

Our greed, our evil desires, all create an unhealthy fluidic atmosphere around us, thus inviting the action of influences of the same order, whereas high aspirations attract powerful vibrations and radiations of the upper spheres.

This is the principle of evolution. It lies within the power of every living being to assimilate the mysterious forces of nature, so as to raise itself with their aid and to ascend from level to level back to the cause of causes, toward the inexhaustible source from which all life flows.

The ascending scale comprises successive and superimposed planes. On each of them, living beings are endowed with the same vibratory state, with similar means of perception which allow them to recognize each other, whereas the beings belonging to higher planes remain invisible and often unknowable to them. Their faster vibrational state and their more subtle and perfect living conditions.

This is what happens to spirits, among themselves, according to their different degrees of purification; and to ourselves, in relation to them. But just as the range of human vision can be extended by means of optical instruments, so can the sum of vibrations be increased or reduced so as to reach an intermediate state in which the modes of existence of two distinct planes may combine and come into rapport.

To communicate with us, every spirit has to reduce the intensity of its

vibrations, while at the same time activating our own. Incarnate humans can help by using their will; to them the point to be reached constitutes the mediumistic state.

We know that mediumship, in most of its applications, is the faculty possessed by certain individuals, which enables them to exteriorize themselves to varying degrees, to disengage themselves from their fleshly envelope, and to give more amplitude to their psychical vibrations. By its turn, the spirit which was freed by death is now enveloped in subtle matter and has to dampen its own radiations in order to put itself in unison with the medium.

Here some explanatory figures are required. Let us admit, with the example of a few scientists, that normal vibrations of the human brain amount to 1,000 per second. In the state of trance or disengagement, the medium's fluidic envelope vibrates more powerfully, and its radiations reach the mark of 1,500 per second. If the spirit, free on the spiritual plane, vibrates at the same time under the influence of 2,000 vibrations, it will be possible for it, through partial materialization, to reduce this number to 1,500. From then on, the two organisms vibrate sympathetically, rapports can be established, and the spirit's message will be perceived and transmitted by the entranced medium.

It is this harmonizing to one another's vibrational waves that sometimes gives the phenomenon of "incorporation"[68] both precision and sharpness. In the other states or types of mediumship, the spirit's thought can also be communicated by corresponding vibrations, though less intensely than the initial vibrations; just like a musical note would repeat itself from octave to octave, vibrating from the highest key of the harmonic scale down to the lowest one.

In humans, intelligence and brain development are intimately correlated. One cannot manifest without the other. As the being rises in the human scale, from wildest to most civilized, its forehead grows, the skull widens, and intelligence blooms. When external development reaches its apogee, thought increases the internal power of the brain by multiplying its basal lines and

deepening its grooves. It draws striations and innumerable convolutions, forming protuberances. It makes the brain a wonderful and complicated realm; so much so that the examination of this organ while still vibrating with the impressions of a life that has just fled away, provides one of the most fascinating spectacles for the physiologist.

As said earlier above, that is proof that thinking works on and shapes the brain; that there is a close relation between the two. It is through playing this admirable instrument's keyboard, that one's thinking is able to derive all the harmonies of intelligence and feeling. But how does it work on brain matter? Through movement. Thought imparts vibratory movements of varied intensity to brain molecules.

As we have seen, everything in nature may be summed up in vibrations, which are perceptible to us provided they are attuned to our own organism, but which escape us as soon as they become too fast or too slow. We have very limited senses of vision and hearing; yet, beyond these set limits, the forces of nature continue to vibrate at dizzying speeds without our noticing anything.

So there. Just like sound and light, so do feelings and thoughts express themselves in vibrations which propagate at a distance at various degrees of intensity. Thoughts of hatred and anger, tender calls of love, complaints of the unfortunate, cries of passion, impulsions of enthusiasm, all go through space, telling everyone everywhere the story of each one and the history of humankind. The vibrations of thinking brains, whether of humans or spirits, cross and intersect each other over and over, without ever getting mixed up. Around us, everywhere, in the atmosphere, they roll and pass by like endless rivers, currents of ideas, floods of thoughts, which impress the senses and are often a cause of trouble and error in manifestations.

I have said: humans and spirits. Indeed, what the human brain sends out as vibrations, a spirit's fluidic brain radiates in the form of wider waves or radiations, which vibrate at a broader and more powerful rhythm, since its fluidic molecules, being more flexible and pliable than the atoms of the physical brain, are also more obedient to the action of one's will.

Regardless of being spiritual or human, all brains possess the same powers. However, in our mortal brains these powers are either slumbering or feebly vibrating, whereas in spirits they reach their maximum energy. The

following comparison will help us better understand this phenomenon.

Charles Dawbarn [69] found this comparison in a block of ice, in which all the potentialities that hold together the crystals which form it lie within it in their latent state. By submitting this block to the action of heat, you release forces which will increase until, in the state of steam, it recovers and manifests all the energies contained in it. Our brain would be comparable to this block of ice, faintly vibrating under restricted action of heat, whereas that of the spirit would be like the steam which has become invisible because it vibrates and radiates at a frequency too high to be perceived by our senses.

The difference of states is complicated by the variety of our impressions. Under the influence of the feelings which animate them, from the calmness of study to the storms of passion, our souls and brains vibrate to varying degrees and at different speeds, therefore attunement between them is only established when their vibrational waves are equal, as is the case with identical tuning forks or when picking up a current at the telephone plates. A brain sending off faint and slow pulsations cannot attune to another one whose atoms are animated by a vertiginous movement.

Therefore, in spirit communications the difficulty consists in tuning in to different vibrations and thoughts. It is in the combination of psychical forces and thoughts between mediums and experimenters, on the one hand, and between these and the spirits, on the other, that rests the entire law of manifestations.

The conditions are favorable when the medium and the other members of the group form a harmonious group, that is to say, when they think and vibrate in unison. Otherwise, when the thoughts being emitted and the forces being radiated are divergent, they become entangled and annihilate one another. The medium, in the midst of these contrary currents, experiences discomfort, an indefinable uneasiness. Sometimes the medium feels as if paralyzed, annihilated. Then it will take a powerful hidden intervention to produce even the slightest phenomenon.

When there is complete harmony among the forces emanating from the group members, when their thoughts converge toward the same goal, a different difficulty may arise. This union of forces and wills is enough to induce physical effects and even intellectual phenomena which are too hastily

attributed to the intervention of unseen personalities. It is therefore more prudent and wise to admit this intervention only when it is established by specific facts.

Quite a few people are surprised and hesitant when encountering difficulties in their first attempts to communicate with spirits. They wonder why their interventions occur so infrequently, so inconclusively; and why humanity as a whole is not yet familiar with a fact of this magnitude.

Other people, while pursuing their research, obtain satisfactory evidence and become convinced adherents. However, they still object to the fact that, despite their ardent desire and repeated appeals, their loved ones on the spiritual plane, departed relatives and friends, have never given the slightest sign of their presence; and this failure leaves them in doubt and painful uncertainty. It is a feeling that Camille Flammarion himself expressed in a recent publication.

Now, any enlightened experimenter can easily explain the cause of such disappointments. Your desire to communicate with a spirit and a corresponding desire on its part are simply not enough. Other conditions determined by the law of vibrations must also be present.

Your invisible friend hears your calls and tries to answer you. The spirit knows that in order to communicate with you, your physical brain and its fluidic brain must vibrate in unison. Therein lies the first difficulty. Its thoughts are processed too fast for you to be able to perceive them. Therefore its first concern will be to reduce its vibrations to a slower pace. In order to do this, a more or less prolonged study will be necessary, and chances of success will depend on the aptitudes and experience of the operator. If the latter fails, all direct communication will become impossible, and the spirit will have to entrust the transmission of its messages to a more powerful or more skillful mind. This is what happens frequently in spirit manifestations. You think you have the direct thought of your friend, whereas it only reaches you through a spiritual intermediary. Hence certain inaccuracies or obscurities which are plausibly ascribable to the transmitter, and which may

leave you perplexed, even if the communication as a whole has all the characteristics of authenticity.

Even assuming that your friend from another world already possesses all the necessary powers, it will still have to seek a medium whose brain, by its vibratory movements, is likely to attune to its own. Yet variety among brains is as vast as that among voices or faces. Absolute identity does not exist. The spirit may be reduced to contenting itself with the least unsuitable instrument for the result it intends. Once found, this instrument should endeavor to develop his or her receiving capabilities. The spirit may succeed in a short time; yet sometimes, it will take months, if not years, for a medium to reach the desired degree of sensitivity.

Or it may be the case that you yourself happen to be this medium, this sensitive. Then, if you are conscious of your faculties, when lending yourself to the action of a spirit, you may certainly reach the goal that it wishes to attain. This will require patience, perseverance, continuity and regularity of efforts. Do you have these qualities? Will your willpower always be taut and consistent? If you act incoherently – today with ardor, tomorrow feebly – in such a way that the vibrations of your brain vary considerably in range, you should not be surprised at the difference and even the nullity of the results.

It may also happen that, feeling powerless to sufficiently activate the vibrations of your brain during the waking state, your invisible friend resorts to trance and seeks, through sleep, to make you unconscious. Then your perispirit will express itself, increasing and expanding its radiations, while making their transmission possible, and you convey the spirit’s thought. But when awake, you will have no recollection of it, having to rely on others to be able to learn what your mouth has just uttered.

All these phenomena are governed by rigorous laws. Whatever your faculties and wishes may be, if you cannot live up to them, your deceased relatives and friends, and all the unseen legions of spirits would act in vain on you. But behold, here come unknown men and women crossing your path as if by chance. They know nothing of these things. To them, the science of the Hereafter may be a total enigma. Yet they possess an organism which harmoniously vibrates or attunes to the thoughts of your nearest and dearest, your siblings, your parents and, through them, they may carry on animated

conversations with you.

As an example, I can quote the following incident: My father, deceased twenty years since, had never been able to communicate through any of the mediums of the group that I have long directed. One of them had barely perceived him as a vague, indistinct shadow. I had lost all hope of talking to him when, one evening, in Marseilles, France, during a farewell visit to a friendly family, a lady, who had not been seen for more than a year, arrived and joined us. We were having a conversation when she fell asleep spontaneously; and then, through her, to my great surprise, the spirit of my father, whom she had never met, manifested itself with the most undeniable proofs of identity. In an outpouring of affection, his spirit expressed to me the sensations, the lively emotions which he had felt since the time of separation.

From the set of studies on the harmonic vibrations of the brains, one observation emerges, namely, that it is through the focus and persistence of our thoughts that we are able to modify the influences that surround us, and put ourselves in contact with similar forces and intelligent beings. This fact is not only true regarding sensitives and mediums; it is likewise true regarding every thinking being. Influences from the Hereafter can radiate over us without there being conscious communication with the beings that populate it. It is not necessary to believe in the existence of a spirit world, nor to want to know it, in order to feel its effects. The law of attraction is inescapable; all things human are subject to it. Thus the criticism often addressed to Spiritists, that they attract exclusively to themselves, through their practices, the evil forces of the universe, crumbles before the facts.

It lies with humans to receive the most diverse inspirations, ranging from the most sublime to the coarsest. Our mental state is like a rift, through which friends or enemies can penetrate into us. The sensual will attract sensual spirits to them, that associate themselves with their desires and actions, increasing their intensity. Criminals will call spirits of murder, that will push them further into the path of evil. The inventor will be assisted by researchers from the life beyond. The speaker will receive impressions that will be fixed

in language forms that move the crowds. The thinker, the musician, and the poet will receive vibrations from the spheres where beauty and truth are the object of worship. Powerful souls will bring treasures of inspiration to them, the breath that blows on dreamy foreheads, giving them talent and genius.

Thus, from one plane to another, the spirit responds to the call of the spirit. All spiritual planes interrelate with one another. The instincts of hatred, cruelty, and debauchery attract the spirits of the abyss. Frivolity attracts shallow and irresponsible spirits. Meanwhile, the prayer of good humans, with their call upon heavenly spirits, rise and resonate from note to note, in an ascending scale, up to the highest spheres, at the same time that, from the deepest regions of the infinite, vibrational waves and emanations from the eternal thought descend upon them, suffusing them with a current of life and force. The whole universe vibrates under the thought of God.

IX
Experimental conditions

The study of phenomena is of paramount importance; Spiritism in its entirety rests upon it. Yet, too often, the lack of methodology and an absence of follow-up and direction in these experiments render sterile the goodwill efforts of mediums and the legitimate aspirations of researchers. It is to such causes that we must ascribe the inconclusive results obtained in so many instances. Experiments are carried out at random, at a feverish pace, without any concern for the necessary conditions. Everyone seems anxious to obtain transcendental phenomena. As a direct consequence of this state of mind brought to experimentation, difficulties pile up. And if after a few sittings, only insignificant phenomena, banal trifles or mystifications are obtained, the group will be discouraged and eventually give up.

If, on the other hand, results turn out to be satisfactory, this may often trigger an unfortunate tendency to credulity, pushed forward with irresistible enthusiasm, that is, a disposition to attribute all the phenomena obtained to the spirits of the deceased. In such cases, disappointments are not long in coming. These disappointments may prove necessary for bringing back doubt and mental balance with the critical sense indispensable for carrying out any research studies, most of all in the field of psychical research, where suggestions, the unconscious and deceptions may mingle on every step of the way with the manifestations of the invisible world.

In other circles, there is wanton criticism, accusing some groups of bad direction, mediums of inadequacy, attendees of ignorance or mysticism. Complaints are directed only against those communications which, being devoid of scientific interest, consist mainly of reiterated moral exhortations.

Such criticism is not always unfounded. But it is generally forgotten that no good can be acquired without labor, and that one should not seek to pluck the fruits before they are ripe. Everything takes patience and timing. Mediumistic faculties, like all things, are subject to the law of progression and development. Instead of resorting to sterile criticism, one should rather facilitate the mediums' tasks, with the concurrence of the assembled

attendees' goodwill, by providing them an atmosphere of empathy, which at the same time will serve as support, encouragement, and protection.

It is essential to submit mediumistic productions to serious control and to bring analytical skills to research work, while keeping always on the alert.

Yet, lack of benevolence, extreme criticism, and systematic denigration may discourage mediums, pushing them to give up or at least keep away from numerous meetings, by confining themselves to family groups and restricted circles where, no doubt, they will find a better atmosphere. But their work will thus benefit only a small number of chosen individuals.

Above all, there is a double pitfall which should be avoided. While too much skepticism is harmful, excessive credulity is no less a threat. One must avoid both extremes with equal care and wisely take the middle way.

As we have seen, the most obstinate bias and prejudices against Spiritist facts and phenomena are to be found among scientists.

They wish to impose methods of orthodox positive science upon these researches, which they regard as the only foundations of certainty, and should these methods not be adopted and followed, they ruthlessly reject all the results obtained.

However, experience has shown that each science has its own methods. One cannot study with success a new order of phenomena guided by laws and conditions which govern facts of a very different order. It is only through personal research or the experience acquired in this way by conscientious researchers, and not by a priori theories, that one can determine the laws governing hidden phenomena. These laws are most subtle and complicated. Their study requires an attentive and impartial mind. But how can we expect impartiality among those whose interests, reputation, and self-esteem are closely connected with systems or beliefs that can be shaken by Spiritualism?

"You must seek truth with a simple heart,"[70] once wrote a famous thinker. It is for this reason that certain scientists and scholars, stuffed with preconceived theories and bent by habit to the rigors of routine methods, will doubtless be less successful in these researches than those who are merely intelligent individuals, yet endowed with practical sense and an independent mind. These limit themselves to observing facts in themselves and deducing

their logical consequences, whereas scientists will stick chiefly to method, even if it is unproductive. What matters first and foremost in this field are the results; and, in my view, the only method that would be deemed good, however defective it may seem, is the one enabling their production.

One does not need to be a mathematician, an astronomer or a talented physician in order to undertake investigations into Spiritism with chances of success. It will suffice for this purpose to know the conditions to be fulfilled and submit to them. These conditions, no other science can teach us. Assiduous experimentation, together with revelations made through spirit guides, alone can enable us to establish a desired set of conditions in a precise manner.

Scientists and scholars take little account of psychical affinities and orientation of thoughts, which however constitute an important factor in the Spiritist issue. They are inclined to regard mediums as laboratory apparatuses, machines that must produce effects at will, and are also excessively insensitive toward them. The unseen intelligent beings that direct the mediums are associated by them with mechanical forces. Generally speaking, they refuse to see them as free and conscious beings, whose will plays a large role in the manifestations, with their own ideas, own designs and aims unknown to us. Spirits do not always find it opportune to communicate; some will keep away because of the off-handedness and extremely material views of the experimenters; others, being markedly inferior, do not feel the need of demonstrating the realities of survival to humans.

Still, it must be acknowledged that such demands and processes as required by scientists and scholars may to some extent be justified by instances of fraud, by means of which phenomena have too often been simulated or misrepresented.

Not only were skillful magicians engaged in such practices, but actual mediums were often caught in the act of trickery. Hence the legitimate reservations held by certain researchers now intent on eliminating from their experiments anything that might have a suspicious character, every element of doubt, any possibility of illusion.

In apport phenomena,[71] for example, it will certainly take a great deal of

evidence as incontrovertible proof to make one believe in the repeated dematerialization and reconstruction of solid objects crossing walls, rather than just assuming that they were surreptitiously brought in by one of the attendees.

However, suspicion must not be pushed to the point of imposing unreasonable conditions on phenomena that make them impossible to happen, as in the case of Dr. Ferroul and the professors at Montpellier, France, with their remote reading through glass plates.

The interposition of this opaque body, creating an insurmountable obstacle to the action of the medium, made this experience akin to that which consisted in shining a dazzling light into a photographer's darkroom during operations under the pretext of control.

The ignorance about the causes in action, and the conditions under which they are manifested, explains the frequent failures of those who, believing themselves to be lecturing others, succeed only in demonstrating the inadequacy of the rules and methods of their own science, when applied to this kind of research.

Moreover, the ambience of suspicion and malicious mistrust surrounding the medium attracts lower order spirits, which take pleasure in disturbances and cause the subject to commit fraud. When these entities break into a group, the best course of action is to adjourn the meeting. It is above all in such cases that the presence and opinions of a spirit guide are of great help; and those who, being deprived of such assistance, engage in such experiments, lie open to great mishaps.

A medium is a delicate instrument, a reservoir of forces which are not renewed indefinitely and which must be used sparingly. Enlightened minds, serious experimenters concerned with their subjects' health, know when to stop at the first signs of exhaustion. The frivolous and deceitful spirits which flock to poorly directed meetings, where neither harmony nor elevation of thoughts reigns, have less scruples. Entering into the views of inexperienced researchers, they will not hesitate in overstepping the limits of the medium's forces so as to produce uninteresting phenomena, and even to mystify the gathered attendees.

Most usually, different causes, forces, and influences are brought into play in these experiments. Sometimes they even contradict and fight one another.

Hence a certain confusion, a mixture of truth and falsehood, of the obvious and the doubtful which are not always easy to tell apart.

Scientists and scholars themselves recognize that suggestion can play a large role in most cases. It follows that, in order to obtain truly authentic and spontaneous Spiritist phenomena, one should carefully abstain from anything that can influence the medium and disturb the action of spirits. Yet this is what some scientists [72] seem to care least about. They cannot fail to disturb the subject with untimely, puerile, insidious questions. They disturb the seances with private conversations and group discussions. While peacefulness, silence, and attention are indispensable, some individuals keep changing places, moving around, interrupting manifestations in progress, despite the injunctions of the spirits. Others, as a certain doctor of our acquaintance, smoke and drink beer during experiments.

Under such conditions, so unreliable, so devoid of honesty, how can one dare to formulate conclusions?

Sometimes the experiment follows a normal satisfactory course. The phenomenon develops, full of promises. Then suddenly a new cause intervenes, a deliberate will steps in, a stream of opposing ideas comes into play. The mediumistic action is disturbed and deviated, producing nothing but effects that are in disagreement with the earlier promising signs. Real facts seem to rub shoulders with fake ones; imposing seances are succeeded by common manifestations. How to disentangle this mess that leaves you perplexed? How to prevent it from happening again?

Here the need for discipline in the sittings is strongly felt and, even more, for the assistance of a higher order spirit, whose strong will can keep all contrary currents in check.

When harmonious conditions are established and the supernal force from above is sufficient, we do not see the contradictions and inconsistencies that may arise either from unconscious forces or backward spirits, if not from the state of mind of the attendees themselves. The phenomenon then unfolds in its majestic grandeur, and probative evidence emerges.

But in order to obtain this assistance from above, it is necessary for the gathered assembly to unite, elevating their thoughts and hearts. It is necessary to enter an inner retreat and pray.

Higher order spirits will not willingly place themselves at the service of experimenters who are not animated with a sincere desire to learn, a profound

love of truth and goodness.

Those who make Spiritism a pastime, nothing more than a frivolous amusement, can only expect incoherence and mystifications.

Sometimes this can become dangerous. Some people take delight in having mediumistic conversations with lower order spirits with vicious and degraded souls; and do this without any benevolent intent, with no regenerative purpose, moved only by a feeling of curiosity and a desire for amusement. While they would not tolerate their homes being visited by these beings during their earthly life, they are not afraid to invite them now, after death, for conversations in bad taste, without realizing that they are thus exposing themselves to dangerous magnetic influences.

If you make contact with perverse souls, whether with the purpose of morally edifying them, or for their redemption, make sure you are under the protection of a reliable spirit guide, without which you will be exposing yourself to unhealthy promiscuity and formidable obsession processes. Do not approach these regions of the Hereafter, except with a strong resolve and lofty purpose, which for you will act as a weapon against evil.

Mediumship, such a marvelous faculty, has been given to humans for a noble use. By degrading it, you would be defiling yourself, and producing poisonous effluvia out of pure emanations!

As in our day, ancient initiates such as the Orientals, gave themselves up to evocations only after being purified by abstinence, meditation, and prayer. Communication with the unseen used to be a religious act, performed with a feeling of respect and veneration for the dead.

Nothing could contrast more with it than the procedures used by some modern experimenters. They go to seances after a hearty dinner, still smelling of tobacco, and with an intense desire of obtaining noisy manifestations or some information that may prove beneficial to their immediate material interests. Yet they are astonished to find, under such circumstances, that only lying and fraudulent spirits come to them, also abusing them and taking great pleasure in causing many disappointments!

In spite of the repugnance displayed by current scientists and scholars toward the means used for attaining high communion among souls, resorting to it is necessary if one wants to keep Spiritism from becoming a new source of abuse and evil.

The state of mind of the sitters, their fluidic and mental actions, are therefore an important element in the success or failure of seances. The more sensitive the medium, the more he or she will feel the magnetic influence of the experimenters. In a group composed mostly of unbelievers whose hostile thoughts converge on the subject, phenomena will occur with difficulty. The first condition is to remove all preconceived ideas in order to leave the spirit free to act. In certain cases, I have been able to realize that a strong and persistent will is capable of paralyzing the subject, if he or she is weak, thus blocking any manifestations.

Divergent thoughts collide and create a sort of fluidic chaos, which the will of the unseen does not always manage to subdue. This is what makes the results so problematic in large gatherings with a heterogeneous makeup, such as those held in evenings at the theater, for example, as experience has repeatedly shown. Those who are eager for publicity, and who, with no regard to necessary precautions, risk themselves in this way, are exposed to very serious failures. These mediums are in real danger. Not only are they at the mercy of backward spirits who delight in crowds, but also placing themselves at the discretion of malicious individuals posing as scientists and scholars, who will demand from them experiments that are contrary to the true laws of Spiritism. And when they have used and abused the medium's forces without any practical results, they will persuade the spectators that there is only fallacy or deceit in this type of ideas.

From this, one can conclude that there nearly always is an affinity between the members of a circle and the acting spirit entities. Human influences tend to attract similar intelligent beings, therefore the resulting manifestations assume a character in keeping with the group's dispositions, tastes and aptitudes.

Some critics wish to conclude that Spiritist communications are only a reflection of the thoughts of those present. This view is easily refutable. It suffices to recall the revelations of names, facts and dates unknown to all, which have occurred in so many instances and have been found to be sharply accurate after control.

Words and messages given in languages completely unknown to the sitters

have been obtained. Mediums have been able to mechanically reproduce the signature, style and form of handwriting of deceased persons that they had never ever met. Sometimes even educated experimenters have been able to obtain only commonplace messages, whereas among illiterate ones there have been remarkable communications both in style and elevation.

The analogies which are observed between the members of a group and the spirits that guide it arise not only from acquired sympathies and similarities of views among them, but also from the requirements involved in fluidic transmission.

For intellectual manifestations, the spirit needs an agent and an environment that provide it with the necessary resources to express its views and make them understood. Hence its tendency to draw closer to humans with whom it can find communion of ideas or feelings.

It is a known fact that in the phenomena of spirit writing, “incorporation” (psychophony), and at times even typtology, the spirit’s thought passes through the medium’s brain, and the medium only allows through a certain number of vibrations, those which are in harmony with the medium’s own psychical state.[73] Just as a ray of light passes through a colored stained glass window, being thus decomposed and projecting only a small amount of vibrations in the process, so the message of a spirit, whatever the richness the words and images that compose it, will be transmitted within the confined limits of the forms and expressions familiar to the medium and contained in his or her brain.

This is a general rule. However, spirits that possess a powerful force and strong will have been seen to compel mediums to transmit teachings far superior to their knowledge, and to point out facts that the mediums’ memories have not recorded.

As for the shortcomings and contradictions that spirit communications may present among themselves – often turned into an argument against Spiritism – it must not be forgotten that spirits, like humans, come in all levels of evolution.

Death does not bring full knowledge and, although their perceptions are wider than ours, they penetrate only little by little, and to the extent of their advancement, the secrets of the immense universe.

Earth’s atmosphere is populated by lower order spirits as to their intelligence and morality, and whose specific density prevents them from

ascending higher. They are the ones who respond to our calls and more frequently communicate with us. Spirits that have risen to a higher realm come back to us only in mission. Their manifestations occur more rarely. These have a character of greatness which does not allow them to be confounded with any other communications.

If divergent thoughts coming from group members are a cause of trouble and failure, by contrast, thoughts directed toward a common goal, especially when elevated, produce harmonious vibrations and impart to the surroundings a feeling of calmness and serenity which suffuses the mediums and facilitates the action of spirits. Then the latter, instead of having to struggle by using their willpower, will have only to combine their efforts with the intentions of the sitters. From then on, the difference in results obtained should be considerable.

That is why, in meetings of my mediumistic group, we constantly ask for silence, inner retreat, union of thoughts and, to make these easier to achieve and also help sitters have their minds on lofty goals, we always start the meetings with a joint appeal, an impromptu invocation to the infinite power and its unseen agents, while also investing it with all our mental resources and the spontaneous expression of our hearts.

Moreover, in meetings of physical effects, where apport phenomena, direct writing and materializations are in demand, it is well to employ an artificial means of setting the sitters' thoughts to one point. One can envisage a sign and place it in imagination above the medium (for example, a cross, a triangle, a flower), and from time to time, during the sitting, recall the sign of convention, bringing back to it the attention of those present, which may easily lose its way and is prone to slacken up.

This procedure replaces with advantage some popular, unedifying songs which are used in certain meetings, and which leave a bad impression in people of delicate tastes and cultivated minds. It is applicable only in a dim-lit room. As a general rule, light exerts a dissolving action on fluids. In all cases where it is not indispensable, as in semi-mechanical writing, it is fine to reduce its intensity and even turn it off altogether, when, for example, there

are seeing mediums or speaking mediums present.

Music, when serious and religious songs are used, can also contribute powerfully to the harmony of fluids and thoughts. Yet, this is not enough. During the meetings, to the union of thoughts we must add the union of hearts. When personal aversion reigns among the members of a group, the action of elevated spirits will weaken or completely vanish. In order to obtain their assiduous intervention, one needs moral harmony, which is the parent of fluidic harmony, to be present in every heart; and that all the adherents feel united by a feeling of sincere and benevolent cordiality, in the pursuit of a common goal.

The most mysterious laws of thought are revealed in such experiments. Sometimes, when the members of a group are deeply concerned, the medium's language will suffer from it. The same occurs with the action of spirits upon the mediums, and vice versa. Whatever control a spirit may exert on a subject, if the latter is restless, worried or agitated, communications will reflect this troubled state. And, if not very advanced, the communicating intelligent beings may also be influenced by group members.

Generally speaking, there is a reciprocity of influences between the earthly environment and the unseen spirit entities, which must be taken into account when analyzing phenomena. However, elevated spirits will escape these influences by their own superiority and the forces at their command, subduing and ruling them, while also asserting themselves with an authority beyond doubt. This is why we must seek above all the cooperation of higher order spirits, and facilitate it by placing ourselves in favorable conditions as required by them, without which we can only attract mediocre spirits with little capacity to serve as our guides or to faithfully translate the high teachings of the spiritual plane.

Small groups with a homogeneous lineup are the most likely to be successful. If it is already difficult to harmonize the vibrations of five or six persons with one another, and with the fluids of the spirits, with yet stronger reason it is evident that difficulties are bound to increase with the number of sitters. It is therefore wise not to exceed ten to twelve members, always the same if possible, especially when beginning experiments.

The constant renewal of assistance, requiring continual work of fusion and assimilation on the part of the spirits, may compromise or at least delay results. If it is good from a dissemination standpoint to open circles to new adherents, at least a nucleus of veteran members should remain compact and constitute an invariable majority.

It is advisable to meet at fixed times, at the same place. Spirits can thus secure the fluidic elements that are necessary to them, while the meeting place becomes impregnated with these fluids, and thus increasingly favorable to spirit manifestations.

Perseverance is one of the qualities indispensable to the experimenter. It can be very discouraging to spend an unsuccessful evening waiting for phenomena to occur. We know that an invisible action is slowly and gradually accomplished during the sittings. Sometimes, the required concentration of forces is achieved only after many evenings of trial, error and effort.

The following examples will show that patience is often a condition for success.

In 1855, Professor Mapes of New York formed a group of twelve members, most of them talented and skeptical individuals, who committed themselves to attend sittings with a medium twenty times in succession.

During the first eighteen evenings, the phenomena displayed were so insufficient and trivial that many of the attendees decried the waste of precious time. But suddenly, during the last two sittings, a series of facts occurred that were so remarkable the same group continued in the study for four years. All its members became convinced adherents.[74]

In 1861, a New York banker, Mr. Livermore, while experimenting with the medium Kate Fox in order to obtain materializations of the spirit of his wife Estelle, saw her form appear only at the twenty-fourth seance. Later on, he was not only able to talk to his wife’s spirit, but also to obtain direct writing messages.[75] Had he lacked perseverance, none of these results would have been achieved.

It will be understood from these facts why rigorous attention must be paid to the constitution of these groups and to experimentation conditions. Depending on the nature of the medium, his or her faculties will produce very different effects. Sometimes they will manifest themselves through phenomena of an ambiguous character, leading to doubt and distrust, and

producing an indefinable impression of uneasiness. However, at other times, mediumistic faculties will be revealed by means of effects so powerful as to dispel all uncertainty.

I have, for my part, witnessed many null or insignificant sittings. Yet I can also say that I have seen mediums who were admirably inspired in their hours of ecstasy and magnetic sleep. I have seen others write in one stroke, sometimes even in the dark, splendid pages full of style, admirable in their strength and elevation. I also have seen, by the thousands, phenomena of "incorporation" (psychophony), which allowed the inhabitants of the spiritual plane to seize the organs of a medium for a few hours and to utter words and make speeches so impressively, that all those who heard them were left with an indelible reminder of those meetings.

To the attentive observer who has studied all the aspects of these phenomena, there is a gradation, like an ascending scale, which goes from spirit rappings and turning tables to the highest productions of thought. It is a cycle that seizes any impartial experimenter, and all individuals who are concerned with truth will sooner or later feel its power.

In spite of all the hesitation, disdain and hostility, a day will come when it will be necessary to study these physical phenomena on a broader level. The latter, through a rigorous chain, will lead to psychography, then, to second sight and hearing, and to "incorporation" (psychophony). And as soon as one wishes to inquire into the real causes of these phenomena, one will be faced with the great problem of survival after death.

As observers advance in this field, they will gradually rise themselves above the material plane. They will be led to admit that physical phenomena are only a vehicle to more distinguished phenomena; and that they all, as a whole, concur in the manifestation of this truth, namely, that the human soul is imperishable, that its destiny is eternity. Henceforth they will formulate the laws of the universe, of the order and harmony of things, as a growing idea, with an ever more profound notion of the objective of life and its bounden duties.

In phenomena, we must therefore distinguish three factors in action: the

will of the experimenters, the exteriorized forces of the medium and the other group members, and the intervention of spirits.

The phenomena themselves can be divided into two main categories: magnetic and mediumistic phenomena. Yet each of them mixes closely and often merges with one another.

A medium, in the state of magnetic sleep, is found to be in three different states, which may succeed one another, each of which with its own order of phenomena, as follows:

1. STATE OF LIGHT HYPNOSIS, which is favorable to telepathic phenomena and thought-transference. However, facts that occur in this state are generally inconclusive. The disengagement of the medium's fluidic body from the physical one is only partial, therefore the medium's own actions may be mingled with the spirit's suggestions.

2. FULL MAGNETIC SLEEP, which allows the medium's fluidic body to exteriorize and act at a distance.

3. DEEP SLEEP, by means of which spirit apparitions and materializations may take place, as well of levitation of the medium, and spirit "incorporations" (psychophonies). Mediumistic sleep, in its various phases, can be induced, sometimes by one of the experimenters, sometimes directly by a spirit. I think it best to let the hidden influences act on their own when they are sufficient. This will preempt the usual objection that it is the magnetizer's action that triggers the suggestion.

Spiritist phenomena are subdivided into four classes:

1. TYPTOLOGY [76] AND TABLE TURNING

   In these experiments, any physical causes, involuntary movements, magnetism or mental suggestions coming from the sitters must all be carefully eliminated. Once the facts that may alone be explained by the aforementioned causes have been removed, there remains a considerable number of phenomena that can actually demonstrate the intervention of intelligent beings other than those present.

2. AUTOMATIC WRITING

   Many messages obtained through this process can be attributed to

unconscious suggestion. As we have seen, since thought can be exteriorized, it sometimes happens that the medium's thought answers his or her own questions. This would be a case of involuntary autosuggestion. Conversely, the action of a spirit is revealed when unknown texts containing details, facts and revelations, which may provide plentiful elements for identification, are obtained through this mode of experimentation.[77]

3. INCORPORATION [78]

In phenomena of this order, the medium's unconscious can play a certain part. Every human being has mental skills, aptitudes, memories, in short, a whole accumulation of intellectual wealth as the fruit of previous existences buried in the depths of our consciousness, and which remains unknown to us during the waking state. This is what constitutes the unconscious, or rather the subconscious.

When somnambulistic [79] disengagement and exteriorization occur, these powers awaken. They vibrate and radiate around the fluidic body of the medium. The psyche recovers its hidden resources and enters into action. Nevertheless, it is easy to discern the numerous cases in which hidden personalities do take possession of the medium's organism and substitute themselves for the medium's own spirit. These personalities are revealed in characteristic traits, voice, gestures and psychological particularities which do not allow them to be confounded with the medium's unconscious.[80]

4. MATERIALIZATION

When occurring in the dark, these phenomena require rigorous control. For this purpose, we can use either scales equipped with balance indicators to detect any loss of weight in the medium, as in the experiments conducted by Armstrong and Reimers; [81] or, following the example of W. Crookes and the engineer C. F. Varley, [82] electric batteries to which the medium is connected through a galvanic current, so as to prevent any equivocal movement on his or her part.

With regard to Spiritist manifestations in the strict sense, what would be the criterion of certainty? Where will the proof of spirit intervention be found?

As said earlier, this evidence consists in all the details that make it possible to establish an accurate identity. Here the experimenter alone can be the judge, and his or her conviction can only rest on the discovery of these characteristic traits, unknown to the medium, and sometimes even the group members, through which the personality of the invisible being may reveal itself.[83]

To acquire certainty and multiply the means of control, it is well to vary the experiments and complement them with one another by resorting to various kinds of mediumship. From all the testimonies and results obtained, we shall thus be able to ascertain the highest amount of evidence which it is possible for an experimenter to have in this field, when several causes act and often merge together.

It is sometimes cruel and disappointing to know and feel that beloved beings are next to us, someone who has departed from this life, and not be able to talk to them. And if we are endowed with mediumship and try to obtain a message, to realize that while the pencil is moving quickly on paper, our own thoughts are so intimately mingled with theirs, that we simply cannot tell the ones from the others, and determine what emanates from us and what comes from them.

Then we use another medium. But whether this one writes or, while entranced, let the spirit speak through the voice, we still recognize, by the effect of this unfortunate suggestion that slips in everywhere, that the medium's personality is mingled with that of our beloved departed one. Then doubt invades us, bringing an anguishing uncertainty with it. Yet, suddenly, a proof of identity springs forth like a flash of light, so lively, so bright, so incontestable, that all hesitation disappears, all doubts are extinguished. Now, in an impetus of faith and love, with the interests of our reason fully satisfied and our hearts moved, we finally communicate with the beloved soul that responded so clearly to our call, assuring us of its everlasting presence and protection.

Messages of general interest and those providing philosophical instructions must be closely examined, discussed, and consciously judged with utmost discretion. The unseen humanity is composed of spirits that have lived in this world, and many, as we know, are not very advanced. However on the spiritual plane there are also brilliant intelligent beings, illuminated by the light of the Hereafter. When they agree to come to us, we can recognize

them by the elevation of their thoughts and the rectitude of their judgments.

In this respect, discernment is indispensable. The investigator must be endowed with a sure judgment, which will enable him or her to distinguish between true and false and, after having examined all things, to retain only what has real value.

Besides the excessive credulity of certain adherents, nothing is more detrimental to the cause of Spiritism than misguided experiments. These have produced a deplorable impression upon researchers of recent date: they provide food for criticism and ridicule, giving a very false idea of the spirit world. As a result, many come out of these sittings more incredulous than they had been.

Credulous persons are full of good faith. They deceive themselves unconsciously and become victims of their own imagination. They are persuaded to believe in the most unlikely things and often assert and spread them with extravagant enthusiasm. This is one of the greatest pitfalls of Spiritism and one of the reasons many sensible individuals and bona fide researchers have distanced themselves from it. They cannot possibly take seriously a body of thought and principles when facts are so badly presented.

We must not accept anything blindly. Every phenomenon must undergo a thorough, in-depth examination. It is under these conditions alone that Spiritism will impose itself on learned individuals of cultivated reasoning powers. Experiments carried out with levity, without any knowledge of cause, and phenomena presented in inadequate conditions, only furnish arguments to skeptical opponents and interfere with, instead of serving, the Spiritist cause.

In summary, we can say that the main cause of errors and failures in experimental psychism is the lack of preparation. Western nations are approaching a field which is new, unknown or forgotten to them – and this is not without its dangers. In the West, only exceptionally are we able to bring about that lofty feeling, that inner light, that deep sense of the soul which the great initiates possessed, and which alone can preserve us from the pitfalls and traps of the unseen.

The first condition is therefore to arm oneself both mentally and morally. Do not seek phenomena until you are able to understand and dominate them, through slow and patient study of the fundamental Spiritist books, much reflection, the development of your will, and the practice of clear and sure judgment. If you do not meet these requirements, it will be wiser to refrain from all such activity, unless you are under the supervision of an experienced and knowledgeable individual, who will support and guide you in your initiative.

The investigative processes that are applied to the physical world cannot be adapted to the psychical plane. Here it is thoughts that come into play. Thoughts are forces. They are the ones which gradually sculpt and shape our inner being. They even influence our external form to make ourselves easily recognizable from facial features and expression, so we can tell a virtuous wise person from a vicious one. But these effects of thought are not circumscribed within the limits of our physical being. They extend around us and form an atmosphere that serves as a link between us and other beings with similar thoughts.

There lies the secret of inspiration, the fecundation of spirit by spirit. A fact results from this law, namely, that the one who, through his or her calls and evocations, comes into contact with the unseen world, attracts to himself or herself beings that are in accord with his or her own mental state. The spirit world is teeming with benevolent and evil entities, and if we cannot purify ourselves and direct our thoughts and forces toward the higher life, we may fall victim to evil powers that swarm around us. In some cases, these have led imprudent individuals to error, blindness, and obsessions verging on madness.

However, if you know how to control your senses and raise your soul above vain curiosities and material preoccupations, making Spiritism a means of education and moral training, you will enter into the realm of true knowledge. Then regenerative influences will descend upon you, and a soft and penetrating light will shine over your path, preserving you from falls, failures and a multitude of dangers.

X

Group formation and direction

Initial experiments

As said earlier, the formation of groups involves rules and conditions, whose observance will greatly affect the outcome. Depending on their psychological state, sitters may help or hinder the action of spirits. While some, by their mere presence, facilitate the manifestations, others pose an almost insurmountable obstacle.

It is therefore necessary to make a selection, especially at the beginning of the experiments. This choice can only be inspired and sanctioned by the results obtained or recommendations of a spirit guide. If, after a certain number of sittings, no satisfactory effect has occurred, the selection may be effected by means of elimination and replacement, until the group's lineup manages to provide the unseen with the necessary fluidic resources for their action.

Similarly, the direction of the group should be entrusted to someone who is not only gifted with psychical attraction, but also trustworthy and sympathetic.

In this field of study, there are a whole set of rules to be observed and precautions to be taken, which may put off shy researchers. It must be observed, however, that such requirements are present in any delicate experiment, in every psychological study, and even in the daily application of our own faculties. Do we not feel, for better or for worse, the influence of our own fellow beings? In the presence of certain people, we feel lively and supported, and our thoughts take flight, our words flow easier, our images become more vivid and colored. Conversely, other people may paralyze and freeze us. So, it is not surprising that spirits, in their complex manifestations, face the same difficulties at an even higher degree, and that, during experiments, we should take rigorous account of the sitters' state of mind and disposition.

Subsequently, once the core group is solidly constituted and its work proves successful, that initial strictness can be relaxed and new members be admitted in limited numbers.

Directing a group is a very delicate task. It demands rare qualities, extensive knowledge and above all a long practical experience of the unseen world.

No group can function without being subject to a certain amount of discipline. This applies not only to the experimenters themselves but also to spirits. The group leader must have a counterpart, a spirit-guide that will assist by establishing order on the hidden plane, just as the incarnate director will secure order on the earthly human plane. These two leaderships must complement one another, inspired by an equally lofty thought of coming together for the pursuit of a common goal.

Whenever such hidden protection is lacking, the group director's task becomes even more difficult. He or she must have enough experience so as to discern the nature of the communicating spirits, to unmask impostors, to counsel backward spirits, to firmly oppose frivolous and perturbing ones, and to provide an enlightened appreciation of the communications received.

As for the members of the group, they too will be a cause of concern. Try to restrain the too personal demands and views of some, soothe the possible jealousy of others and, especially among mediums, avoid the intrusion of selfish sentiments, which attract evil entities of the Hereafter and impart a strange, disorderly aspect to phenomena. In short, being a group director is an arduous task.

In the group that I have long directed, effective assistance from the unseen has been received from the beginning, and we had few difficulties of this sort. We endeavored, through the expansion of our thoughts and our hearts, to put ourselves in unison with our guides and, thanks to our efforts and their help, we have succeeded in creating around us a mental radiance, an atmosphere of peace and serenity, giving to most manifestations a character of moral elevation, sincerity, and frankness, which have impressed those present and kept deceptive spirits away.

Later, as a result of the introduction into our group of an enthusiastic experimenter of physical phenomena assisted by a whole procession of lower order spirits, common phenomena were added to the elevated manifestations. Frivolous spirits, prone to trivialities, started interfering with us, and it took

all of our willpower combined to react against the evil influences that had invaded our group.

But before this troubled period, thanks to our persistence and unity, the manifestations had gradually assumed a character of clearness and grandeur that riveted us. Proofs multiplied, strengthening our convictions and making them permanent. Private predictions were made. Counseling, instructions, scientific and philosophical insights that would be enough to fill several written volumes, were obtained.

We were able to attract and retain in our sittings valuable people from all walks of life and different backgrounds: materialists, indifferent individuals, religious believers, and even priests, whose broad and investigative nature did not object to these experiments.

Many attempts remain unsuccessful; many groups last only a short time and then dissolve due to lack of patience, dedication and cohesion.

Transcendent phenomena are avidly sought after; but when people learn that, in order to obtain them, they must undergo a gradual training of several months or even years, meet on fixed dates at least every week, and not be discouraged by repeated failures, they simply hesitate and give up. It is therefore necessary to admit into groups that are still being formed only members who are absolutely determined to persevere in spite of obstacles and lengthy processes. It is only with time and sustained efforts that the organisms of both mediums and experimenters can undergo the profound modifications that make it possible for them to exteriorize the forces indispensable to the production of phenomena.

While it is good to choose your group members carefully, you must not push things to the extreme and become too exclusive. With help from above and the assistance of spirit guides, all discrepancies that may prevail at first in certain circles can be attenuated and replaced with homogeneity. That is what the spirit entities teach us.

“You are in daily contact with numerous people who inevitably act upon you as you act upon them. These actions and reactions are necessary, for

without them progress could not be attained. Believe in our constant assistance, our affectionate presence next to you. It is in our love that we, devoted guides and protectors, find the strength to remain near those we hold dear. You should imitate us. Get rid of any jealous or malicious thoughts. Learn to sacrifice yourselves, live and work together. Do not spare yourselves, that is to say, fear not the troubles which may result from certain relations with your fellow humans. They no doubt bring with them a diminution of pleasure and enjoyment; but such relations constitute a law of humankind. You must not live selfishly, but include others in your own prosperity." (*Anonymous mediumistic communication*)

These instructions outline our course of conduct in regard to attendance at mediumistic meetings. The similarity of tastes and affinities that create social conditions and intellectual culture among people will necessarily influence to a certain extent the lineup of groups. Yet, however high he or she can be placed on the social ladder, an adherent must never disdain popular seances, nor dwell upon the lack of instruction or education of those who take part in them. Intellectuals should prove their excellence by rather seeking to associate themselves with the work of groups made of humble members, while at the same time endeavoring to make their knowledge and inferences available to their less favored fellow beings. It is above all in Spiritist groups that people must come together without distinction of social classes. [84]

Spiritism shows us that our social advantages are transient. In order to progress and educate itself, every spirit is required to be born and reborn successively in the most diverse walks life, so as to acquire the merits inherent in each of these conditions. Spiritism highlights, with a power of logic that no other philosophy or body of thought ever possessed, the fraternity and solidarity of souls arising from their common origin and ends. True superiority lies in our acquired qualities. It is mainly expressed by a profound sense of our duties toward the humble and the dispossessed of this world.

However, a considerable distance separates a principle from its application. If the progress of the spiritual idea is less accentuated in France than in certain foreign countries, it is above all due to the indifference and apathy of well-to-do Spiritists. Only a small number of them seem to be concerned with the responsibilities incurred upon them. It must be admitted that it is the humble working-class groups that organize themselves with

greater ease and last longer. Their members know how to live their beliefs. They come to an understanding, they help each other by means of community funds, maintained with great effort and financial difficulty, and destined to rescue those among them who have been visited by hardship.

Some of these groups have been operating for ten to twenty years. Every Sunday, their members meet at fixed times to hear the instructions of the spirits. Their attendance is remarkable, and the practice of Spiritism produces tangible results in them. They find in it a diversion from their life of toil and misery, a source of enlightenment and comfort. The description given by the deceased of the sensations they experience, the situations they have suffered after death, the consequences of bad habits they contracted during their earthly existence, as emerged from these dialogues, make an impression on their hearts and minds, and have a deep influence on their characters and actions. They gradually form a perception of what relates to the Hereafter; a precise notion of the purpose of life emerges for them, making acceptance easier and everyday duties more tolerable.

These are no longer the exhortations prepared by a preacher, speculations of a philosophy professor, or cold teachings of a book. It is the living, dramatic, sometimes terrifying examples given by individuals the attendees have known, who lived near them, and now are reaping in the Hereafter the fruits of a lifetime. These are the voices from beyond the grave in their simple and brutal eloquence, with the vibrant, spontaneous appeal of moral suffering, the expression of anguish of guilty spirits that see their earthly chimeras vanish forever, to undeceive them by revealing their errors and shame, with remorse coming down like molten lava to the depths of their conscience, sharpened by their detachment from all corporeal matter.

The day when these practices will have spread all over the world, and communication between the living and the dead can provide humans with advance knowledge of destiny and its laws, a new principle of education and regeneration will have emerged. We shall find it to be an unparalleled instrument for reacting against the morbid effects produced on the masses by materialism and superstition.

In a group made up of four to eight people of any sex or gender, what kind

of mediumistic experiments should be undertaken?

If no mediumship has been ostensibly manifested yet, it will be good to start with the table turning experiment. It is the simplest, most rudimentary method and, by that very reason, within the reach of most people.

Sitting alternately round a light table, men and women with hands spread flat on the bare wood, will summon their friends of the spiritual plane, then wait in silence, nurturing a desire to receive, but without any finger pressure or tension of mind.

There is no point in prolonging attempts for more than thirty minutes. From the first sitting, fluidic impressions are almost always felt by the sitters. Currents emerge from their hands, revealing by their intensity the degree of aptitude possessed by each of them. Cracking of the table is heard, which in turn proceeds to oscillate, shake, and then raises itself from the floor, tilts to one side, and stands with one foot raised slightly off the ground.

It is therefore advisable to agree on a set of signals. The intelligent force is asked to manifest itself by striking a number of strokes corresponding to the letters of the alphabet, either in the table or on the floor, with the latter's raised foot. Thus words and phrases can be dictated, questions asked, answers obtained. A dialogue develops between the group leader and the invisible intelligent being. One can abbreviate and simplify this by adopting conventional signals. For example, a single stroke for "yes," and two for "no." This mode of communication, slow and tedious at first, may become quite fast with practice.

Once the mediums in the group are identified, it will suffice to place them at the center of the group, around a small pedestal table, in order to facilitate movement and the communications themselves, whereas the other members will sit circling them.

With sheets of paper and pencils placed nearby, the questions and answers should be scrupulously transcribed. As soon as an intelligent being is revealed by precise, sensible, and characteristic replies, it will be possible to consult it about the group lineup, the mediumistic faculties of the sitters, and the procedure to follow in the work. However, we must be on our guard against vain and frivolous spirits that flock around us and are not shy to take on famous names in order to mystify us.

The group may also experiment simultaneously with the table and with mediumistic writing. Phenomena of this order will generally lead to other,

higher manifestations such as, for example, trance or magnetic sleep, and spirit “incorporation” (psychophony). At the beginning, it is advisable to devote each half of the seance to one of these activities successively.

Next to the sitters, there are almost always spirits eager to communicate and send a friendly message to those that they left on Earth. In all the meetings held by my group, second sight mediums described such spirits which, due to certain details in their attire and distinctive traits, were able to be recognized by the assisted person as being a deceased relative or friend who often were totally unknown to the mediums.

The procedure to experiment with automatic writing is very simple. The experimenter holding a pencil with the tip resting lightly on paper, mentally evokes some of his departed loved ones and waits. After a certain period of time, which varies considerably from case to case and from person to person, the writer feels the arm and hand seized with feverish agitation, which gradually increases. Then an alien impulsion makes the medium scribble shapes, lines, senseless drawings. This impulsion must be obeyed and patiently subjected to exercises of bizarre appearance, which are however necessary to make the medium’s organism supple and regulate the emission of spiritual fluids.

Little by little, after a few sittings, alphabet letters will appear among the incoherent signs, then words and phrases. The medium will start receiving texts, at first brief and consisting of a few lines, then growing longer and longer, as the mediumistic faculty progresses. Finally, more accurate and extensive messages will be conveyed.

During the training period, the medium may work outside the meetings, at a fixed time every day, in order to stimulate the development of his or her faculty. But, as soon as this period ends, as soon as the manifestations take on an intelligent aspect, the medium must avoid isolation, work only in seances, and submit the output of mediumistic writing to the control of the group’s director and spirit guides.

There are various ways to facilitate alphabetical communication. The letters are written on a dial, on the surface of which a moving triangle slides. It only requires the contact of a medium’s fingers to transmit the necessary fluidic force to this small piece of furniture. Under its action, the triangle moves quickly and designates the letters chosen by the Spirit. In some

groups, letters are indicated by raps within the table. Others have successfully adopted a basket with a beak or the American planchette.[85] These methods are numerous and varied. They may be tried until one is found that suits best the fluidic resources and preferences of the experimenters.

One cannot stress too much the dangers posed by the intrusion of evil spirits in the seances of a group still in formation, or in the attempts of an isolated medium. All too often, it is our own thoughts that attract them.

Hence, I strongly advise all serious researchers to eliminate any business or leisure concerns from their mediumistic meetings. Do not allow your thoughts to wander away, but instead fix them on a lofty purpose. Attune yourself to the views and feelings of the higher souls. By keeping this state of mind, you will gradually feel powerful currents descend upon you and penetrate you, increasing the sensitivity of your fluidic organism. At first momentary and intermittent, this sensitivity will soon increase, becoming permanent. Your perispirit will dilate and purify itself, developing more affinity with the spirit guides, and hitherto unknown faculties will awaken in you: second sight, spirit hearing, speaking mediumship, healing, etc. It is through perfecting yourself and elevating your moral condition, that you acquire that profound sensitivity, that psychical sensitivity that makes it possible for you to obtain the highest manifestations, the most convincing evidence, and the most accurate identification of spirits.

You and your group should pray at the beginning and at the end of each sitting. At the beginning, to elevate your souls and attract wise and enlightened spirits to the meeting; at the end, to thank them for the teachings and the beneficial assistance received. Let your prayer be short and fervent, with less of set formulas and more from the fullness of your hearts.

Prayer detaches the human soul from the matter that imprisons it, and brings it closer to the divine source. It establishes a sort of spiritual telegraphy, by which the thought from above, responding to the call from below, descends into our obscure regions. Our explorations of the abysses of the unseen would be full of perils if we did not have above us more powerful and perfect beings to guide us and enlighten our path.

It is not necessary to make evocations. In my group, we rarely practice them. We prefer to appeal to our usual spirit guides and protectors, allowing all spirits the freedom to manifest themselves at their discretion. The same occurs with many groups known to me. Thus the great argument of certain opponents of Spiritism falls of its own accord, when they claim that it is wicked to engage in evocations, and to compel spirits to descend upon Earth. Spirits, like humans, are free and will only respond to calls addressed to them if they so wish. All injunctions are in vain; any incantations, superfluous. These latter are methods created to impress and impose upon simple minds.

It is helpful to start the seance by reading a serious and pleasant passage taken from select Spiritist books or journals. This reading should be the subject of comments and exchanges of views among the sitters, under the supervision of the group director. It frequently happens that the communications given later on by the spirits, as a result of these readings, are usually related to their subjects which are thus complemented and further developed. This is a form of mutual teaching that cannot be too strongly recommended.

We may also ask questions of the spirits concerning all issues related to philosophy and social life, the situation of all beings in the Hereafter, the impressions felt after death, the evolution of the soul, etc.

All these questions should be asked by the group director. Simple and clear, they must always be selfless and of a high moral nature. Those who question the unseen, seeking personal interests and hidden treasures, asking for revelations about future events, and engaging in occult pacts by making use of symbols, talismans, and bizarre formulas, are not only the target of criticism and derision, but also of mocking spirits which will be drawn to them and expose them to their usual traps and trickery.

Conversely, by tackling the lofty angles of Spiritism, we are assured of the collaboration of serious minds, which make it their duty to cooperate in our advancement and education. By entering into this sphere of studies, we soon realize the richness and variety of Spiritist teachings and how easy it is to solve, with its help, a multitude of problems hitherto obscure or indecipherable.

While the support of higher order spirits is not only desirable but should

be sought at all times, that of lower and backward spirits may also be useful sometimes. It is useful to reserve a slot for them in the scheduled work of groups that are strongly constituted and already assured of adequate protection. By their very inferiority they offer a typical subject for study: their identity is sometimes affirmed through traits and features that compel conviction. The standing they occupy on the spiritual plane, and the consequences resulting from their past actions, provide precious input to our understanding of the universal laws.

Some groups take upon themselves the special task of evoking lower order spirits and, through counseling, instruct them, attempt to moralize them, and help them extricate themselves from the bonds that still tie them to matter. This is one of the most commendable missions; it requires a perfect union of wills, a profound experience of the realities of the unseen, which one finds only in well established groups with a long service in Spiritism.

In the case where the mediums are lacking or seem to be unproductive, the group does not have to be reduced to inaction. Like all scientific groups and societies, he must seek a point of interest in all matters related to the object of its predilection. Such matters must be placed on the agenda and, as well as the edifying readings in common mentioned above, should be commented and discussed, to the great profit of the sitters. From time to time, certain meetings may be devoted to conferences or talks, after which those present may express their arguments and opinions. By this means, the work of a group will become not only an excellent means of instruction, but also provide public speaking exercise which will prepare group members for the task of public dissemination. By equipping themselves with the necessary skills for discussions and debates, they can become valuable defenders and disseminators of the Spiritist idea.

It is always through debates of this nature that speakers and talkers are formed. It is thus that they acquire eloquence, that gift of stirring souls, of seizing them, of leading them toward a goal. The adherents of Spiritualism must not neglect any means of preparing themselves for future struggles, of appropriating this double power of speech and knowledge which should enable a body of thought and principles to assert itself in this world.

XI

Moral applications and results of Spiritism

In concluding the first part of this book, it may yet be important to inquire what sort of impact the phenomenon of Spiritism has had on the frame of mind of our age.

At first glance, the results do not seem very significant. But should we not await the action of time, so that an idea may gradually bear all its fruits after an incubation of centuries?

Nevertheless, when the matter is considered closely, it will soon be recognized that Spiritualism has already exerted an enormous influence on the frame of mind of our contemporaries. Not only has it opened to science a completely unknown field of research, but it has actually forced scientists to face the reality of facts: suggestion, exteriorization and telepathy, which they had long denied or rejected. Also, it turned thoughts toward the Hereafter, awakening in the foggy and sleepy consciousnesses of our time the sentiment of immortality. It has made the belief in the survival of the departed more vibrant, more real and more tangible. Where once there were only hopes and beliefs, it has now brought certainties.

Beneath the surface of the phenomenon, a whole revelation was hidden. A body of thought and principles was born of a communion of souls. And through it, the problem of destiny, forever tormenting humanity, took on a new aspect. Together with elements for a definitive solution, it has brought means of verification and control that had hitherto been completely out of our grasp.

All revelations from beyond the grave agree on one crucial point. Beyond death, as in the vast chain of our existences, everything is regulated by a supreme law. Our destiny, whether happy or unhappy, is the consequence of our own actions. The soul creates its own future. Through its own efforts, it emerges from the lower materiality of things, advancing and rising toward the divine light, uniting itself more closely with the radiant societies of the

spiritual plane, and becoming increasingly engaged in universal work.

Spiritism has this inestimable advantage of satisfying both reason and sentiment. Until now these two powers of the soul had been in constant struggle, in perpetual conflict, and hence became a cause of profound suffering and disorder to human societies. Religion, by appealing to sentiment and rejecting reason, often fell into fanaticism and error. Science, proceeding in the opposite direction, remained dry and cold, and powerless to govern morals.

So, one can imagine the superiority of a body of thought and principles that is able to restore balance and harmony between these two forces, by uniting them and giving them both an impulsion toward good. This is, as we shall see, the beginning of an immense revolution. By reconciling sentiment and reason, Spiritism has become the scientific religion of the future. Freed from constraining dogmas and oppressing infallibilities, humans thus recover their independence and the use of their faculties. They now examine, judge freely, and accept only what seems good to them.

Spiritism broadens the notion of fraternity. It establishes by facts that fraternity is not merely an abstract concept, but a fundamental law of nature; a law whose action is exercised at all levels of human evolution, both physically and spiritually, alike in what is seen and what is unseen. On account of their origin and the ends assigned to them, all souls are siblings.

Thus human fraternity, which had been proclaimed by different messiahs in all great epochs of history, has found in the teachings of the spirits a new basis and a confirmation. Gone are the cold and banal affirmations inscribed on the pediments of our monuments: this instead is a living brotherhood and sisterhood of souls, which together emerge from the obscurities of the abyss, climbing the calvary of painful existences: our common initiation by suffering; our final union in the light.

With Spiritism, both heart and reason have their share. Our circle of affections expands. We feel better supported in our ordeals, since those who loved us during life still love us beyond the grave, and help us carry the burden of earthly cares. Only in appearance are we separated from them. In reality, humans and the unseen often walk side by side through joys and tears, successes and setbacks. The love of our beloved ones envelops us, comforts us, warms us. The terrors of death have ceased to weigh on us.

If wisely practiced, Spiritism is not only a source of instruction; it also becomes a means of moral training. Spirits' opinions and counsels, their descriptions of life in the Hereafter, have an influence on our thoughts and actions. They bring about a gradual change in our character and way of life.

There is nothing more impressive than hearing, in the course of evocations, the narratives and avowals of anguish experienced by spirits that misused their earthly lifetimes. The selfish ones, that now encounter only indifference and emptiness around them. The envious ones, that are plunged in a sort of dark night produced by their accumulated evil thoughts and malignant remarks.

Among countless such cases, I will cite one, which took place in our group of studies. The spirit of an old greengrocer of Amiens, France, decided to tell us of her anxiety and trouble when, after death, she found herself in the midst of thick darkness, resulting from the slanders and reproaches to which she was constantly prone while living on Earth. She waited and waited, long and painfully. Finally, after years of uncertainty and gloomy isolation, she heard voices telling her, "Pray, Sophie. Pray and repent." Sophie prayed. And her fervent prayer, like a pale gleam, lit up the fluidic night which had been enveloping her. According to her own words, "the black turned gray," a gray which gradually diminished, until her spirit could regain the relative freedom of less advanced spirits.

Is this not a lesson to remember? Let us note especially that the descent of the spirit into evil inevitably leads to a proportional diminution of freedom. Thoughts and acts create a gloomy fluidic atmosphere around the guilty soul, and then condenses and gradually closes, enclosing it as in a prison.

On Earth, we can see an application of this law of moral balance and justice in the outbreak of cruel infirmities, deprivation of the senses and prolonged paralysis, which are often the consequences of one's past, the distant repercussion of faults committed.

Let us go back to Sophie. For five years, this spirit participated in our mediumistic work and, although not very advanced, her communications and judgments were not without interest. Long beforehand, she announced her reincarnation in the same town she had once inhabited. Today she has taken over a new earthly body, by becoming the first child of poor craftspeople.

She is the eldest in a whole series of little beings whose births she already predicted, thus preparing herself for an obscure and laborious existence which will facilitate her progress, and whose vicissitudes will be tempered with the possession of a beautiful mediumistic faculty.

Very often, during our seances, proud entities came to express their vexation, their humiliation to find themselves, on the spiritual plane, beneath those whom they had despised on Earth. Also, misers despaired at the dispersion of their goods and possessions, and sensual spirits bitterly regretting being deprived of all the physical pleasures they used to enjoy on our plane.

Suicides narrated their torments. They had felt for a long time all the sensations of the type of death they had chosen. One of them repeatedly heard the sharp detonation of a pistol shot. Another suffered the pangs of asphyxia. All of them were immersed in deep dejection. They only belatedly realized that the ordeal they had thought to avoid was actually a reparation due, a redemption from past wrongs, and that now it would be necessary for them to face it again by returning to the flesh under even harsher conditions.

Even more desolate are the conditions of those who have tainted their existence with murders and spoliations, living off the property, honor, and dignity of others, the footstool of their passing glory and their fortunes. They constantly find themselves in the presence of these accusing scenes, and now face the prospect of experiencing the repercussions of their actions on numerous lifetimes to come, in successive existences of self-effacement and pain in order to repair them.

But above these complaints and disturbing confessions, at the end of each sitting arose the voice of Jérôme, our spirit guide, which uncovered the implications of such revelations, bringing to light the great laws of destiny, and showing the ways of repentance and reparation open to all beings. Because all, after their faults and falls, will eventually find peace of conscience and rehabilitation through trials and work.

In the long run, these teachings, these descriptions of rewards and penalties, have had an appreciable influence on the minds of the experimenters. They have led them to consider life and its responsibilities more seriously, and to submit their actions more strictly to the austere rule of duty.

Often it is our relatives, a parent, an elder sibling, that come from the

Hereafter to guide us, to comfort us, to call our attention to the imperfections of our nature, to make us feel the need of self-reformation. Next to these touching exhortations of our departed nearest and dearest, the teachings of human wisdom seem comparatively quite cold!

Our group was placed under the protection of two elevated spirits; the one was Jérôme, our usual guide mentioned above; the other was a spirit of feminine appearance, whose identity was concealed under a vague pseudonym, the "Blue Spirit,"[86] and which possessed a wonderfully penetrating sense. This spirit could see into the depths of anyone's heart, scrutinizing its most hidden recesses, and then, with perfect tact and in a soft but penetrating voice, by means of an entranced medium, would teach us to know ourselves better, pointing out the means of perfecting ourselves.

Each member of the group was, in turn, the object of this spirit's attention and solicitude during our sittings, receiving its maternal advice. Whenever the "Blue Spirit" manifested itself, we recognized it at the very first words uttered, by the sweet inflections of its voice. Its words and judgments were awaited with great eagerness by all present. Its departure always left us with a profound impression, as if an angelic soul had hovered over us and penetrated us with its emanations. This educational and edifying action lasted for years, and its results were very substantial.

It should be noted that most humans are unaware of their faults. They do not even know what they are and accumulate faults upon faults without realizing it. On this respect, the instructions given by our spirit guides are precious. Those given by the Blue Spirit brought about some serious changes in most of us; and I can say that I myself have greatly benefited from them.

Like so many of my fellow human beings, I was oblivious to certain unpleasant aspects of my character. Sometimes the force of my thoughts sprang up in me, in sudden outbursts and rapid gushes, carried away in vivid and exaggerated expressions, which caused me great inconvenience. My spirit guides drew my attention to this issue. Their counseling taught me to control myself and impose silence on the impetuous enthusiasm of my nature.

Thus, through the practice of Spiritism and instructions of higher order spirits, human beings will acquire this precious knowledge of life, namely: the mastery over emotions and feelings, the control over oneself, the profound skill of self-observation, and then, the command over one's own blind impulses.

New Spiritualism[87] has already linked to one another adherents from all walks of life and countries. It will one day link all religions and human societies.

So far, the diversity of races and beliefs has been an essential factor in the development of humanity. Divergences and oppositions were necessary in order to create a magnificent variety of forms and groupings. Every human individual, like every different people, had to isolate themselves at first to become themselves, to build up their distinct self, and to acquire free and conscious autonomy. In the course of time, the principle of individuality should precede in its applications any collective and solidary life, without which all vital elements would have been confounded and neutralized.

Little by little, the circle of collective life expanded; groups have been formed which then came into conflict with one another. A series of wars ensued. It is through perpetual strife, struggles of races, religions and ideas, that this painful march continues and the conscience of humanity awakens.

Every religion, every society, every nation, brings its contingent of ideas. Each of them gives rise to special forms, to particular manifestations of art and thought. In the great concert of history, each civilization furnishes its personal note, the contribution of its genius. Emulation was born out of the struggle, the crucial competition. Powerful works emerged from shocks and conflicts.

And today a great idea is being outlined. Slowly emerging from the shadows of centuries, another concept of universal life comes to the fore. Through the apparent confusion, amidst the chaos of events, new social and religious forms are being elaborated. From a state of diversity and separation, there is a move toward solidarity and harmony.

In spite of passions and hatreds, the barriers among nations have been gradually lowering themselves. Relations are multiplied by becoming easier, ideas are exchanged, civilizations interpenetrate and cross-fertilize one another. The idea of a unified humanity is being built up. We talk and dream of universal peace, language and religion.

But to satisfy these still vague aspirations, to turn dreams into reality, and different beliefs into one common faith, a powerful revelation has to

illuminate the intelligent beings, bringing their hearts closer together, all living forces together, all human souls toward the same goal, toward the same concept of life and destiny.

New Spiritualism, based on science, brings us this conception, this revelation, in which the great conceptions of the past, the teachings of the messiahs sent by Heaven to Earth are merged and revived in simpler and higher forms. This will ultimately be a new breath of life and regeneration to all the religions of the globe.

Any belief must be based on facts. It is from the manifestations of souls freed from the flesh, and not from obscure and aged texts, that we must ask the secrets of the laws which govern future life and the ascension of all beings.

The religions of the future will be based on communion between the living and the dead, the mutual teaching of two humanities. In spite of the difficulties still posed by communications with the unseen – although these will most likely be ironed out with experience and time – already now one can see that it constitutes a basis that is much broader than any of the existing ones supporting religious ideas. This will be one of the greatest merits of Spiritism, of having procured it for the world. In this way, it will have prepared and facilitated religious and moral unity. The solidarity among the living on Earth with those in Heaven will gradually spread to all inhabitants of our globe; and each and every one of us will one day communicate in the same belief, in the same accomplished ideal.

The human soul will learn to know itself in its immortal nature, in its endless future. We, spirits in transit on Earth, will understand that our destiny is to go on living and incessantly progressing through the infinity of space and time, to be more and more initiated into the wonders of the universe, and to cooperate ever more closely in the divine work.

Once penetrated by these views, we will be able to detach ourselves from material things and carry our aspirations high. We will feel connected to our fellow travelers in the great eternal journey, and to all souls by a current of love and attraction which, in turn, attaches itself to God and keeps us all united in the bond of universal life.

Henceforth, no more narrow prejudices, no petty rivalries. All the reforms, all the works of human solidarity will receive a vigorous impulse. Above our small earthly homelands, we will see the great common homeland unfold: the

sky without limits.

From there, higher order spirits stretch out their arms. We are all ascending, through trials and tears, from obscure regions to the divine light. The path of mercy and forgiveness is always open to the guilty. Even the most fallen souls can rise through work and repentance, for God is righteousness, God is love!

Thus the spirits' revelation dispels the mists of hatred, the uncertainties and errors that surround us. Through it the great sun of goodness, of concord and truth, has dawned upon the world!

Part two

Experimental Spiritism: Phenomena

XII

Exteriorization of human beings, Telepathy, OBE,[88] The phantasms of the living

Humans are still a living mystery to themselves. Of our beings, we know and use only the surface. Our personalities have unknown depths where forces lie asleep – acquired knowledge, memories accumulated from past existences, a whole world of ideas, faculties and powers that our fleshly envelope conceals and cancels out – but which awaken and enter into action during normal sleep or in magnetic sleep.

This is the mystery of Psyche, that is to say, of the soul encased with its treasures in the chrysalis of flesh, from which it emerges at certain hours, freed from physical laws, from the constraints of time and space, and asserts itself in its spiritual power.

Everything is rhythm and alternation in nature. Just as the day follows the night, and summer comes after winter, the free life of the soul succeeds its stay in the corporeal prison. However, one's soul is also released during sleep. It is found in one's enlarged consciousness, that consciousness which it has gradually built up through the ages. It seizes itself, sees itself, becomes a matter of astonishment to its own self. Its gaze then plunges into the obscure strata of its past, finding in it all its mental experience and skills, all the riches amassed in the course of its evolution, and which were buried by reincarnation. What the physical brain was impotent to express, its fluidic brain can now manifest and radiate with an intensity all the more vivid as its disengagement is more complete.

Sleep is, in reality, nothing else than the exit of the soul from the body. In

ordinary sleep the psychical being moves away, only partially regaining its independence and almost always remaining closely connected to the body. In induced sleep this disengagement is accentuated in all respects. Under this magnetic influence, the bonds which attach the soul to the body are gradually loosened. The stronger the hypnotic state, the deeper the trance, the more will the soul detach itself from the body and rise up. Its lucidity increases, its thoughts penetrate deeper, its perception widens. At the same time, its obscure layers, those hidden regions of the self, are dilated, become enlightened, and start vibrating. All past acquisitions are reawaken. Psychical faculties, such as remote viewing, spirit hearing, and clairvoyance come into play. In the higher states of trance, one can reach the last confines, the extreme limits of physical life. The self is on a level with spirit life and exercises its powers. One degree further and the fluidic link that holds the soul to the body would be broken. That would be the absolute, definitive detachment known as death.

Listed below are some phenomena based on which it may be established that the soul has its own existence independent of the body, and is endowed with a whole set of faculties that are exercised without the concurrence of the physical senses.

First, during normal sleep, when the body is at rest and the senses are idle, we can see that one's being is alert and acting in us. It is able to see and hear through material obstacles, such as walls and doors, and from all distances. In the dream state, images succeed one another, scenes unfold, voices are heard, and conversations are held with various characters. Our fluidic being can move, travel, hover over nature, witness a multitude of scenes – at times incoherent, at times clear and precise ones – and all this is accomplished without the concurrence of the physical senses, since our eyes are shut and our ears no longer active.

In some cases, psychical vision during sleep has as much sharpness and accuracy as physical vision during waking. This has been demonstrated by testimonies of conscientious and learned experimenters.

Mr. C. F. Varley, engineer-in-chief of the Post Office Telegraphs of Great Britain, in his deposition at the inquiry opened by the London Dialectical

Society, has related the following fact personal to him: [89]

While traveling, he checked into a hotel in the middle of the night, went to bed and fell asleep. During sleep, he saw in a dream the hotel yard, and noticed two men working there. Then, after suggesting the thought awakening to his own brain, and waking up immediately afterwards, he was able to promptly check the reality of his dream. The layout of the yard area, and the spot where two workmen were still busy, were exactly the same as he had seen them in spirit. Yet, that was the first time he had ever seen or been to that place.

Mr. C. Flammarion, in his book *L'Inconnu et les Problèmes Psychiques*,[90] cites a large number of cases of remote viewing during sleep. Here are a few:

Mr. G. Parent, mayor at Wiège-Faty (France), sees in a dream the farmhouse of one of his friends on fire in the nearby commune of Chevennes.

Mr. Palmero, a Highways Department engineer from the harbor city of Toulon (France), is informed from his wife's dream of the unexpected arrival of her father and mother, whom she saw at sea on a steamer.

Mr. P., a doctor of laws at Philippeville (Belgium), reports a dream of one of his lady friends. In her sleep, she saw a shipwreck in which more than a hundred people drowned; a fact which was confirmed the following day in all its details.

Mr. H. M. Lee, the son of a Protestant bishop of Iowa (USA), in a dream sees his father, who lived about three miles away, fall down a staircase. This fact was attested by several witnesses, including Mr. Sullivan, bishop of Algoma.

Mr. Carrau, of Angers (France), saw his brother dead, stretched upon his bed in St. Petersburg (Russia) and his children on their knees around it.

A Frenchman, employed as a machinist in Fou-Chou (China), one night dreamed that his child left in France had died of croup, lying on a red quilt. He shared his dream with one of his friends, who laughed at his credulity. The first letter which he received from France after this was from his wife, and it announced the death of their child under the very same conditions he had seen in dream.

Mr. E. Orieux, chief executive officer of the department of the Lower Loire (France), while staying in Cartagena (Spain), dreamed that he was attending the funeral of his best friend who lived in Nantes (France), although he had no idea that she had actually just died.

Mr. Jean Drenilhe in Paris was able to see in a dream the deadly fall down a staircase of General de Cossigny, a family friend.

Marshall Serrano announced in Madrid the untimely death of the Spanish King Alfonso XII, at Prado, which he had perceived in a dream.

The following case is extracted from the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* in London: [91]

"I was staying with my mother's cousin, Mrs. Elizabeth Broughton, ... and she told me the following strange story:

She woke one night and roused her husband, telling him that something dreadful had happened in France. He begged her to go to sleep again and not to trouble him. She assured him she was not asleep when she saw what she insisted on then telling him – what she saw, in fact. First a carriage accident, which she did not actually see, but what she saw was the result, a broken carriage, a crowd collected, a figure gently raised and carried into the nearest house, and then a figure lying on a bed, which she then recognized as the Duke of Orleans. Gradually friends collecting round the bed, among them several members of the French Royal family – the Queen, then the King – all silently, tearfully watching the evidently dying Duke ... As soon as it was daylight she wrote down in her journal all she had seen ... It was before the days of electric telegraph, and two or more days passed before the *Times* announced 'The death of the Duke of Orleans.' Visiting Paris a short time afterwards, she saw and recognized the place of the accident."

Similar phenomena occur in magnetic sleep. C. Flammarion cites several examples. Among these, there is the case of the wife of a colonel of cavalry, who, in the magnetic state, sees the suicide of an officer at a distance of three miles.[92]

The spirits of certain people continue to work during sleep and, with the help of knowledge acquired in past lives, manage to achieve considerable results.

The following are some famous examples:

Voltaire declares to have conceived in one night, in a dream, a complete canto of his *Henriade*.

La Fontaine claims to have composed his fable about *The Two Pigeons* while dreaming asleep.

Coleridge once fell asleep while reading, and when he awoke he remembered having composed two hundred verses in his sleep, which then he

only had to write down on paper.

Composers J. S. Bach and Tartini used to hear, in their sleep, the performance of sonatas that they could not finish at their will. As soon as they awakened, they wrote them from memory.

In all these cases, intellectual activity and capacity to work seemed greater in sleep than during waking hours.

Sometimes the soul, disengaged from its bodily ties, can communicate through dreams with other living or dead persons, and receive instructions and warnings from them.

From Messina (Sicily), Mr. Scarfoglio, a special envoy of Naples (Italy) newspaper *Matinno*, has telegraphed the following news story published on January 9, 1909: [93]

"Francesco Gatto, a soldier on service at Naples, was in love with a servant in the house of a retired captain at Messina, named Facciola, and they were to be married in May. The soldier at Naples did not hear of the disaster at Messina for some time. 'When the news was brought by the torpedo boat *Spaga*, he set out and after forty hours' traveling reached Messina."

"On making inquiries he learned that Captain Facciola's house in Piazza Scotto was destroyed, the inhabitants dead and his betrothed had disappeared. For some hours he waited on the quays hoping to see her pass. He explored the camps and called out at random in the darkness of the night. One night he fell asleep, worn out with fatigue and grief; and he dreamed that he saw his betrothed alone at a window of the burning house; he saw her dressed in a robe he had admired, her black hair standing up from her forehead, and seeing the flames which touched her clothing, she called out in terror to her fiancé: 'Help, Francesco! Help! Save me!'"

"Francesco awoke, dressed himself quickly, went out of the tent, climbed the mountains of mortar and fallen stone, reached the camp in the square of San Martino; he went to the lieutenant's tent, pushed past the sentinels, awakened Lieutenant Vittorio Gatto and called out: 'She is still living, I am sure.' Then he related his dream, the sentences broken by sobs. The officer asked him: 'Have yon been among the ruins?' The soldier replied: 'I heard no voice, but the young woman is below them, Lieutenant, I am certain. Why, I heard her call. For the love you bear your fiancée, if you have one, for your children, if you are a father, I implore you to come.' And he fell down unconscious. The officer, greatly moved, gave way; he aroused Francesco

Gatto, and a gang of helpers set out, directed by the lover. They arrived at the fallen house, and the young soldier called out: ‘Menichella, in the name of our love, answer me!’”

“From the midst of the ruins, a voice, unmistakably a voice, was heard calling out : ‘I am living, release me!’”

“After several hours’ intense labor, often at the risk of their lives, they reached her. Menichella Spadaro came out from her tomb exactly at midday. Weeping, she embraced her fiancé and said that she remembered the earthquake perfectly, but immediately after it she lost consciousness. She awoke that morning and she remembered having cried out on awaking and having called to her fiancé.”

“This instance of telepathy has been examined by Doctors Spinelli, Bonini and Calligaris, who have taken care of· the young woman.”

The French journal *Annales de Sciences Psychiques* of October 1910 published the account of a dream related by the priest of Domdidier in the canton of Fribourg (Switzerland), on April 18, 1908, to Mr. M. Rollinet, who was giving a conference in the locality at the time, and then transmitted by him to Mr. Camille Flammarion. The following is its brief summary:

“In 1859, Mr. Doutaz, aged eighteen, had just gone to bed after preparing a philosophy paper for the next day. While asleep, he had a strange vision, which was repeated twice in succession. He saw his father, who lived fifteen miles from him, and said to him the first time: ‘My dear Joseph ... your poor sister Joséphine is dying in Paris’; and at the second time: ‘My dear Joseph ... etc., but your mother is still unaware of the painful news.’ The next day, on his way to school, Mr. Doutaz received a letter from his father which confirmed in exact detail what he had heard at night during his dream.”

The German journal *Zeitschrift für Spiritismus* of July 9, 1910 quotes the following dream narrated by the Earl Henrik Stezkij:

“A rich landowner from the region of Tarnów, Poland, lost 600 florins during a walk. Stopping at an inn, he was telling of his annoying loss to the innkeeper, a Mr. Kunsteiner, when a poor muleteer named Kosminter, who had just entered, asked him under what circumstances he had lost that sum. He did not reply, and continued his conversation with the innkeeper. Then Kosminter spontaneously handed him the lost purse. Stunned by his honesty, the owner gave him 300 florins as a reward. Two weeks later Kosminter, covered in blood from head to toe, appeared to him in a dream and accused

the innkeeper of his death. Two weeks afterwards, the same dream was repeated with more details; but it was only at the third time, because of the extraordinary precision of the revelations, that he called the police. The innkeeper was arrested, convicted of murder and sentenced to death."

The action of the soul at a distance, without the aid of the senses, is revealed even during the waking state in the phenomena of *thought-transference* and *telepathy*.

We know [94] that every human being possesses a specific dynamism, a vibratory state which varies infinitely according to the individuals, and makes them capable of producing in others, and of perceiving in themselves, very diverse psychical sensations.

The vibrations of our thoughts, when projected with intensity of will, spread far and wide and can influence other organisms in affinity with ours. Then, by causing a sort of backlash, they return to the point of emission. Thus two souls connected by the undulations of the same psychical rhythm can feel and vibrate in unison with one another. Sometimes a mysterious dialogue gets under way: Thoughts too subtle to be expressed in words are exchanged; images, messages, calls float or fly in the fluidic atmosphere between these souls, which, despite the distance, feel united, penetrated by the same feeling, and radiate from one to the other the emanations of their psychical personalities.

Those who love one another often correspond in this way, exchanging their joys and their sorrows. But the heart does not readily yield its secrets. A mother can hear through space the calls of her unhappy child. A thousand impressions besiege us, which stem from the distant thoughts of those who are dear to us. [95]

This theory is based on indisputable evidence.

Let us first recall the experiments described in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* in London. The operator and the subject, placed in the same room but separated by a curtain, without making any gestures or uttering a single word, silently conveyed their thoughts. The same experiment was then successfully carried out by placing the operator and the percipient, first in two different rooms, then in two different houses. In order

to avoid any cheating, the thoughts to be transmitted were written beforehand then drawn at random.

In a September 1907 edition of the British newspaper *The Daily Express*, it was reported that several thought-transmission seances were carried out by Mr. and Mrs. Zancig [96] in the presence of King Edward VII and other high dignitaries of his court. The king has made known the results obtained, and it has been especially since then that public attention in England has been directed toward this sort of phenomena.

The king subjected the two subjects to the most difficult tests, always with complete success. It has been found that the communion of thoughts existed, not from time to time, but in a constant and natural way, between husband and wife. If, for example, the first read a letter, the second, at a great distance and blindfolded, perceived at the same time the contents of this letter. Everything communicated to the husband reached the woman at once. The two subjects vibrated in unison. In addition, Mrs. Zancig proved her remote viewing faculty to the king, by speaking to him of things that he was absolutely sure none but himself knew.

The experiments made by psychicists and magnetizers are innumerable and accompanied with details so accurate, as to make it impossible to explain them as mere hallucinations. [97]

A few other cases can be cited, several of which have been hitherto unpublished:

“Dr. Balme of Nancy was caring for the Countess of L—, who was suffering from dyspepsia. She came to him for consultation and he never went to her house, which was situated outside of the town. Three days after one of her visits, on May 19, 1899, when he crossed his antechamber after returning home, he heard these words: ‘How ill I feel, and no one to help me!’ Then he heard the sound of a falling body. The voice was that of Madame de L—. When he tried to verify his impression, he found that no one in the whole house had seen or heard this lady. He retired to his workroom, collected his thoughts and, having placed himself in a light state of hypnosis, he transported himself to the lady’s presence. He saw all her actions and gestures and noted them minutely.”

“Madame de L— came to see him and told him her impressions, which agreed on all points with those of the doctor. ‘After you had retired to your chamber,’ he asked her, ‘what was it you seemed to be searching for about

you?' – 'It seemed to me that someone was looking at me,' she answered." [98]

Similarly to Dr. Gibert and Mr. Pierre Janet, whose subject, Lénie, obeyed his suggestion half a mile away,[99] Dr. Balme had the power to transmit his will mentally to a lady from Lunéville. He thus obliged her to come to his office in Nancy, to request his care. One day, having focused and directed his thoughts toward her, he uttered the following words: "Come, I wait for you by the noon train." At the appointed hour, the young woman entered his office, saying, "Here I am." [100]

C. Flammarion, in his book L'*Inconnu – The Unknown* (London, 1900, p. 293), cites the case of a child named Ludovic X., who, at the age of five, solved very complicated mathematics problems and repeated words and phrases that his mother drew mentally from a book. The boy himself did not calculate anything, only read in the thought of his mother the solution of the problems posed. Whenever she was away, he became totally unable to formulate even the simplest solution.

According to Gabriel Delanne,[101] individual vibrational states can be classed into three general categories, called respectively visual, auditory and motor. This explains the variety of perceptions in sensitives and mediums. In sensitives belonging to these various types, the impressions produced by the same cause will assume different forms. The psychical action of a living being at a distance, or that of a spirit, will induce in some the vision of a figure or phantom; while, in others, the hearing of sounds, noises, and words; or even the displacement of objects around some sensitives.[102]

Impressions may also vary among sensitives belonging to the same sensory category. The initial thought will then be perceived by them in distinct forms, even though the meaning of the manifestation remains identical in substance. This is what I myself have noticed many times in our own experiments. Several hearing mediums perceived the spirit's thought but translated it into different terms.

This shows us that a great number of telepathic phenomena must be arranged in a subjective order, since they occur only in the brain of the percipient. Though internal, they are no less real. The vibrational wave emanating from an extraneous thought strikes the subject's brain and gives it the illusion of an external fact, which, depending on its dynamic state, will appear to be visual, auditory or tactile.

We know that the impressions of the senses are all centralized in the brain. The brain is the true receiver which stores sensations and transmits them to consciousness. Now, depending on the vibrational state, we are inclined to attach our sensations to one of the three sensory states mentioned above. Hence the variety of suggestive impressions perceived by the senses.

The following are several unpublished cases, where telepathic action manifests itself by noises and visions:

Mrs. Troussel, born Daudet, a relative of the famous French novelist, living on Daguerre Street in Algiers (Algeria), communicates telepathically, at regular intervals, with several of her friends, each serving both as transmitters and receivers. They establish reciprocally transcripts of the thoughts emitted and impressions felt, and compare them afterwards. Mental questions asked at a distance get precise answers; even a complicated problem has thus been solved. On average, seven out of ten experiments are successful. Sometimes thoughts emitted with intensity are capable of producing physical effects upon furniture, making it vibrate strongly.

Mrs. Troussel tried the same experiment with one of her friends from Marseilles (France). They had arranged to communicate with one another on a Maundy Thursday, at half-past eight in the evening. But since their time zones differed, and Marseilles was a couple of hours ahead of Algiers, as Mrs. Troussel went up to her room to seek isolation, she felt overwhelmed by a feeling of sadness. A moment later, having recovered from it, she saw her young friend from Marseilles appear. There was a little child beside her, who stretched out the arms and smiled at her, and showed her a ray of light that seemed to descend from heaven. Mrs. Troussel hastened to sent her friend a written account of this experience. Their letters crossed each other. The one from Marseilles contained the following lines:

“Dear friend, I chose Maundy Thursday because it was the anniversary of the death of my beloved child. At the appointed time, you came to comfort me. I thought, at that moment, of this dear little being; have you also thought of my child? I saw you go upstairs from the ground floor. You were in a dress that I have never seen before (exact details). Strangely enough, while thinking of all this, I saw at the same time the immensity of the sea and the light beam from the lighthouse which seemed to come from the sky to reach me.”

Written messages have been given by exteriorized human beings at great

distances. Aksakof narrates the following cases: [103]

Mr. Thomas Everitt of London obtained by the hand of his wife a message from one of his friends, also a medium, who had left for New Zealand.

Judge John W. Edmonds of New York reports that two mediumistic groups, gathered at the same moment of time in Boston and New York, conversed with each other through their respective mediums.

In a similar fashion, two groups of experimenters, having assembled in Madrid and Barcelona respectively, communicated together by the same method. After each sitting, transcripts were written by both sides, which were then immediately mailed. Both messages were always consistent. [104]

The French journal *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme* (Paris, January 1908, p. 441) brings an interesting story extracted from the memoirs of the medium Baroness Adelma von Vay:

“Lady von Vay related that during the campaign of 1866 her cousin, Count von Wurmbrand, was a member of the Austrian army.” On May 25, she had a long communication from him: “It’s me, your friend and cousin Ludwig Wurmbrand. I’m fine; my spirit is with you, but my body is in the camp, among the soldiers ...” On June 15, a new communication: “We are waiting for a battle to begin ... my body is completely asleep ... I think very much about you ... “ On July 4, still another communication: “Do not doubt the presence of my spirit ... we just had a big battle ... As for me, I’m fine.”

“On July 5, Wurmbrand’s name was on the death list; yet on July 9, Lady von Vay received the following message: ‘... Fortunately I survived the battle of Koniggratz ... In three days I will send you confirmation by letter.’ Indeed, Lady von Vay received a letter from her cousin telling her the details of the battle, and enumerating the very heavy losses incurred by his troops, which accounted for the rumor of his death.”

All these facts show for a certainty the existence of mental and reciprocal action from soul to soul, starting already in this life; and the possibility of interventions by exteriorized living humans in psychical phenomena.

To practice telepathy, two conditions are necessary. On the one hand, there must be focusing and exteriorization of thought on the part of the operator. In order to act mentally at a distance, one must collect oneself and direct one’s thoughts persistently toward a chosen goal. This will induce a partial disengagement of the psychical being from the body, and we create a current of vibrations which links the operator to the percipient. In the latter,

on the other hand, a sufficient degree of sensitivity is required.

These conditions do not occur as often as one might suppose. They must be created by a prolonged action of one's will, and then improved upon by the daily exercise of the acquired faculties.

When experimenting with one of his friends, Dr. Balme at first could not obtain any results.[105] Every day, at the same hour and for a long time, they continued their attempts. The thoughts exchanged were at first contradictory. One day, however, a word was perceived to be exact. Then, afterwards, sentences of four or five words were transmitted. At the end of two years, they communicated at a distance, at any moment of the day, by first clapping a few times as a signal.

In these experiments, we see perseverance as an essential element for success. Above all, one must learn to keep one's thoughts steadily focused. As a rule, thoughts are unstable and fluctuating. Too often they will fly from one object to another. We must keep them under the control of our will and impose a definite goal on them. This exercise is most beneficial in the sense that it makes us accustomed to mental discipline.

Once our thought is steadily focused and the vibrational current is established, communication becomes possible. We are not only able to correspond telepathically with our earthly friends, but also with those on the spiritual plane, for the law of correspondence is the same in both cases. It is no more difficult to talk to mentally with our departed beloved ones, than with those who are still on Earth but have been scattered far and wide because of life's duties and responsibilities. The power of evocation which reaches the spiritual being through immensity, in a region unknown to the evoker, is the most obvious demonstration of the power of thought.

Sometimes the soul, during sleep or in the awake state, exteriorizes itself, being objectified in its fluidic form, and appears at a distance. Hence the phenomena of *phantasms of the living*.

One of the most remarkable cases is that of Emilie Sagée, a schoolteacher in Wolmar (today Valmiera, Latvia), whose out-of-body state was witnessed many times by the forty-two people living in her boarding school.[106]

To this case one can add that of Rev. T. Benning, narrated by Mrs. Emma

Hardinge Britten in the American newspaper *Banner of Light*. So as to not be prevented by indisposition from fulfilling his appointment, his double went to the town of Troy (NY, USA), where he was to give a sermon the next day. He was seen and heard by three persons, one of whom was even pushed by him. In the meanwhile, his body had never left New York.[107]

A young German maid from Boston (USA), who was homesick and suffering from fever, kept dreaming about her family in Europe. There, for fifteen consecutive nights, all her relatives heard her knock on the door of her parents' house and saw her phantasm enter it. Everybody assumed she had died, but she eventually recovered her health.[108]

The Times from London, in its edition of January 1, 1909, devoted a long article to a case of apparition of a living person witnessed at the East Rudham Vicarage (Norfolk, UK). The Rev. Dr. Hugh Astley, following a railway accident on the way to Biskra (Algeria), was taken into the English hospital in Algiers. While he was in treatment, his phantasm was seen repeatedly and was distinctly recognized by three people in East Rudham, notably by Rev. R. Brock, a vicar in charge of replacing Dr. Astley at the parish during his absence.

Most testimonies emanate from the Society for Psychical Research of London. This society composed of prominent researchers has raised a veritable scientific monument with the publication of the book *The Phantasms of the Living*,[109] and of its *Proceedings*, a collection of twenty-two volumes covering a period of twenty years of studies. These works relate thousands of cases of apparitions rigorously and methodically observed, reporting both their circumstances and evidence, and conferring authenticity to each and every one of them, backed by strictly controlled testimonies.

These facts establish in an incontestable manner the relations existing between the apparition of the double and the living person it represents.

One cannot possibly attribute a subjective character to all these phenomena. As we have seen, in certain cases the brain of the percipient alone is impressed by the vibrations of a distant thought, vibrations which are transmitted to one's visual focus, giving rise to an image of the manifesting individual. But here, in most cases, the phenomena observed do not lend themselves to this interpretation. Objectivity is demonstrated by the fact that the phantasms are seen by several people at once or successively; for example, when the phantasm transports itself to the different floors of a

house.

The phantasms of the living can act upon matter: they open and close doors, ring bells,[110] play chords on closed pianos.[111] They produce impressions upon domestic animals, leave fingerprints and handprints on dusty furniture, and sometimes even written communications, which remain an irrefutable proof of their passage.[112]

Apparitions of the living have been witnessed at all times of humankind. History tells of many cases supported by important testimonies.

Tacitus reports [113] that Basilides appeared to Vespasian in a temple in Alexandria, while held back by disease at a distance of many days' journey.

Christian mysticism[114] records as miraculous cases of bilocation or bicorporeality in which phenomena of exteriorization are easily recognized.

St. Alphonsus de Liguori was canonized for having shown himself simultaneously in two different places. Being asleep at Arienzo, he was able to witness the death of Pope Clement XIV in Rome, and announced, as soon as he awoke, that he had just witnessed that event. The case of St. Anthony of Padua is famous. Being in Spain and while preaching there, he stopped suddenly in the midst of his sermon and fell asleep. At that very moment, in Padua (Italy), his father, falsely accused of murder, was led to execution. St. Anthony appeared to them, demonstrated his father's innocence, and the true culprit was made known.

There are many analogous facts in the life of Catholic saints, especially those of St. Ambrose, St. Francis Xavier, St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Mary of Agreda, St. Lydwine of Schiedam, and others.

Human beings, freed from fleshly bonds by prayer, lofty aspirations, and by leading a sober and pure life, become more apt to exteriorize themselves.

The possibility of these manifestations is also demonstrated by the experiments of magnetizers, such as Du Potet, Deleuze, Billot; and by Kerner, Perty, and d'Assier, among others.

It should be noted that these phenomena do not occur only during sleep. A violent emotion, certain illnesses, agony, death can all induce out-of-body experiences.

Flammarion, in *Inconnu – The Unknown* (ch. VII), cites one hundred and eighty-six cases in which dying persons can be heard or appear at a distance. [115] In an issue of *Revue des Revues* (reply to Saint-Saëns), the prominent astronomer recounts the following fact:

“A young woman, after seven years of a tender relationship, had been separated from the man she loved. The latter married and she heard no more of him. Several years elapsed, and then, one night in April 1893, she saw a human form enter her room, which advanced and leaned over her. She felt with terror the prolonged kiss of an icy cold mouth on her lips. The next day around noon, while reading a newspaper, she learned of the death and funeral of the man she loved.”

The French newspaper *L’Éclair* published the following account on November 24, 1908:[116]

“A captain of the British navy was crossing the South Seas. One evening, while he was enclosed in his cabin, he made algebraic calculations on the blackboard. At one point, he sat down at his table and transcribed the results on his notebook. As he turned to read the last equation from the blackboard, he suddenly saw a hand with a vaguely defined wrist, which appeared, grabbed the eraser from the chalk ledge, and effaced the formulas. He remained stupefied, motionless. An indistinct, at first nebulous shape appeared. It was a man in uniform, in which he recognized one of his former schoolmates, a naval officer like himself, whom he had not seen for many years. He noticed that he had grown old. That shape took a piece of chalk, wrote a latitude, then a longitude, and disappeared. Recovered from his astonishment, the captain rushed out of his cabin, called his lieutenants, told them about the apparition he had just seen, and showed them the writing on the blackboard, while pointing out that he had never ever traced figures in that way.”

“They took note of the date and time, and unanimously decided to go full steam to the point in the seas marked on the blackboard. They reached it in five days and sailed for long hours in the vicinity of that place located in the open ocean, thousands of miles away from the coast and off the shipping routes. At last, on the morning of the sixth day, they saw something floating in the distance, a dark black spot in the clear and foggy horizon. They reached it. It was a raft composed of boards which were precariously assembled, and to which, without food or water and at the mercy of the slightest gale, three dying castaways were clinging, sole survivors of the shipwreck of a big ship that had burned down and sunk swiftly, as narrated by them forty-eight hours later, when they were able to speak again. This ship was commanded by the officer who had appeared in front of the blackboard.

The blaze had occurred at the point inscribed by the phantasm, at the exact moment when it had manifested itself."

"The captain noted the fact in his logbook. No doubt one might think that he had himself unconsciously written the figures on the blackboard. But, even so, it would still have to be admitted that he acted under the influence of the spirit of his former comrade, who was dying in the flames, and who transmitted to him the latitude and longitude of the place where the catastrophe had occurred."

These cases are so numerous that it would be a vain exercise to try to explain them by some theory of hallucinations. Here there is clearly a causal relationship. Death coincides with the apparitions in too many cases for these coincidences to be considered as a result of chance. The voices heard are those of distant people; the visions, those of known individuals; their garments, verified as accurate. A detail worthy of note: dogs, horses, etc. get agitated and express their uneasiness at the approach of these phenomena. They seem to have the vision or its premonition long before humans can perceive them.

Phenomena due to the exteriorization, or extra-corporeal action of the human soul, have been studied carefully and categorized by Aksakof under the general denomination of *animism*. This learned observer wished to make a clear distinction between such phenomena and the manifestations of the deceased. In reality, this distinction does not exist, since these facts, as we shall see further below, are always identical either before or after death. The soul of a externalized human being, just like a discarnate spirit, can influence mediums, dictate communications or messages either by writing or by means of table turning, cause displacements of material objects, appear at a great distance from his or her body, and impress photographic plates.

Allan Kardec devoted a whole chapter of *The Mediums' Book* [117] to the study of apparitions of the living. These phenomena were therefore not ignored by Spiritists, as has been claimed, and Aksakof in his book *Animism and Spiritism* has simply confirmed what had been recognized long before him.

More recently, experiments have demonstrated the possibility for some human beings to partially disengage from their body, materialize certain parts of their fluidic form, and produce various phenomena.

Mediums such as Eusapia Paladino and Eglinton have caused, at several

meters distance and without any physical contact, the displacement of objects in full light, and left imprints of their fluidic limbs in soft substances, such as clay, paraffin and soot.[118]

We cannot pass over in silence cases of “incorporation” (psychophony) of the souls of the living in sleeping mediums. This kind of manifestation almost always brings with it an element of disorder and error in trance phenomena, consummate experience is necessary in order not to confuse them with manifestations of the deceased. In fact, the living, when “incorporated”[119] in an extraneous organism, do not always realize their true situation

Here is an example of why it is necessary to keep oneself always on the alert during these experiments::

For three years, the soul of a living person manifested itself through “incorporation” (psychophony) in the group that I directed in Tours (France), without being distinguished from the spirits of the deceased that usually communicated in our sittings. However, this person provided us with the most specific details about his identity. His name was B—, he had been a sacristan at the village of D—, in the Sarthe department (France). His slurred words, his heavy and fatigued gestures, his slumped attitude, all contrasted with the medium’s own ways and conduct, and that of other familiar spirits. We could recognize him from the first words spoken. He told us the smallest incidents of his life, the remonstrances addressed to him by his parish priest on account of his laziness and drunkenness, the bad state of his church and the material entrusted to his care, and even about his fruitless searches on the spiritual plane for a confirmation of what he had been taught! Everything in him, his words, his memories, his regrets, gave us the firm impression that we were dealing with a deceased individual.

How surprised we were when a member of our group, visiting that region on a commission to investigate the case, informed us that B— was still with us, here, in the world of the living! Everything he had told us was accurate. Our fellow member was able to meet and talk to him. Having become old and increasingly prone to laziness and drinking, he had to resign his duties. Every evening he went to bed early and slept a heavy sleep. He could thus exteriorize and transport himself up to our meeting place on the nights of seances, and incorporate himself in one of our mediums to whom he was connected by affinity, the cause of which has always eluded us.

One wonders how the soul of the living can produce, during sleep, such

surprising and complex phenomena. In certain cases, apparitions and materializations require great power and a profound knowledge of what we call spiritual chemistry. Therefore it causes astonishment that as soon as it disengages itself from its fleshly envelope, one's soul may fathom such laws.

The force necessary to produce these phenomena seems to be drawn from the physical body, to which one's ghostly form is connected by a kind of fluidic cord, whatever the distance. The existence of this bond is perceived by seeing mediums and confirmed by the spirits themselves. It is so subtle that, at any slightly more vigorous sensation perceived by the physical body, the soul is suddenly brought back, resuming its place in the latter. This action constitutes one's awakening from trance or sleep.

It should not be forgotten that mind commands matter. The soul disposes at will of the imponderable elements of nature. It is through these means that it first builds up its fluidic body, the framework of the physical body, and then builds up the latter with the aid of earthly elements which it combines and assimilates.

During normal sleep, as well as in magnetic sleep, the bond that unites those two bodies is loosened without breaking. The two envelopes get separated. If, while moving away, the fluidic body gathers enough energy, it can condense and materialize itself, act upon matter, produce sounds, make noises, and make itself visible.

In all this, the driving force is the will. It is a creative faculty. We have the demonstration of this in the phenomena of suggestion, by means of which one's active will can produce profound modifications in the human body. Thus the mind, through mental power, can lend to the subtle matter of forms and shapes, the attributes, the outlook of garments, of clothes that will make it possible for others to recognize it.

Moreover, in most cases, the manifesting medium is assisted by invisible friends. The interventions of the spirit "John King" in Eusapia's seances, and those of "Abdullah" in Eglinton's, among others, are clear proofs of this fact. In general, the inhabitants of the spiritual plane possess a large experience and extensive knowledge of the things related to their plane. Their willpower is strong and they can effectively assist in the production of certain telepathic phenomena, which the medium cannot carry out without their help.

All the phenomena just described belong in the domain of observation. To these one may add voluntarily induced experiential facts, which allow us to watch the presence of a person's physical body and fluidic double at two different places simultaneously.

In this case, nothing is due to chance or fortuitous coincidences. The goal set in advance by the experimenter is pursued and achieved by using methods and under conditions that defy criticism. Such phenomena are numerous. Below a few of them are mentioned:

"Mr. Desmond FitzGerald records his experience with Lewis ... who willed a girl under his influence to touch somebody at a distance, which she did, much to the alarm of that person."[120] This was a positive case of out-of-body state.

Mrs. De Morgan, co-author with her husband of the book *From Matter to Spirit* (London: Longman, 1863), once put a little girl under hypnosis and ordered her exteriorized double to go and knock on the door of a certain house. The blows were heard by several people there, who immediately opened it and found that the street was deserted.[121]

It is possible to find, in certain books and journals,[122] numerous cases in which living persons, evoked in their sleep, come to give through mediums communications containing proofs of identity.

To all of the above we should add photographic reproductions of doubles or phantasms of exteriorized living beings. Here the testimony is irrefutable, without the possibility of illusion. After all, the photographic plate cannot be suspected of being subject to hallucinations.

Dr. Istrati, a member of the Romanian Council of Ministers, concentrating his will before falling asleep, was able to exteriorize himself, then appear and be photographed in spirit by the Romanian senator Mr. Hasdeu, at a distance of about 100 miles. On the photographic plate, we can distinguish the fluidic image of Dr. Istrati staring straight into the photographic apparatus.[123]

One certainty emerges from this series of facts, namely, that the human soul is not, as materialists want to believe, a product of one's organism and transient as the latter; nor is it a function of the brain, vanishing at death; but rather a being-in-itself, independent of the organs of the body.

Its action can be exerted outside the limits of the body, transmit its thoughts and sensations to other beings, and even disengage itself and appear in its fluidic form. Independent from the laws of space and time, it can see at

a distance and transport itself far away. It can read the past and penetrate the future.

The existence of the soul is thus revealed by facts. The body is not an indispensable condition for its life and, if it is linked to it during its stay on Earth, such link is only temporary. After its separation from the physical organism, it continues to manifest itself through phenomena of a Spiritist order, the study of which will be the subject of the next chapters.

Studying soul exteriorization happening during life leads us to study its manifestations after death. The laws governing both phenomena are identical. Exteriorization is only the conveyance of the spirit into a state of freedom, toward that other form of existence where it finds itself freed from the hindrances of matter.

Among its merits for glory, long despised Spiritism stands out for having taught the human soul to study itself down to its depths, and to part the thick veil which concealed the secret of its true nature and greatness.

XIII

Premonitory dreams, Clairvoyance, Forewarnings

In the preceding pages we have merely touched on the topic of dreams. This subject certainly requires further clarification.

Dreams, in their varied forms, have only one cause: the emancipation of the soul. It disengages itself from the fleshly body during sleep and is transported to a more or less elevated plane in the universe, where it perceives, by means of its own senses, the beings and things of such plane.

Dreams may be divided into three main categories:

First, there is the ordinary dream, purely cerebral, a mere reverberation of one's physical dispositions or moral concerns. This may also be reflect impressions and images stored in the brain during the waking state. In the absence of any conscious direction or control of the will, these develop automatically or are translated into vague, meaningless and disconnected scenes which nevertheless remain engraved in one's memory.

While any suffering in general, and certain diseases in particular, may well facilitate the release of the spirit, they also further increase the incoherence and intensity of dreams. The spirit, hindered in its flight and brought back to the body at every instant, cannot rise. Hence the conflict between matter and the spiritual principle, which influence each other. Impressions and images will thus collide and mingle.

At the first degree of disengagement, the spirit floats in the atmosphere, not very far from its body. It plunges, so to speak, into the ocean of thoughts and images which rolls in every direction on the spiritual plane. Once there, it collects and is permeated by confusing impressions, strange visions, inexplicable dreams. Sometimes these get mixed with reminiscences of earlier existences, which are increasingly more vivid as the soul's disengagement is more complete, allowing the deep layers of memory to vibrate into action. Dreams, ranging through an infinite variety depending on the soul's degree of emancipation, can often impress the material brain,

which explains why we are able to remember them when we wake up.

Finally, there are deep dreams or ethereal dreams. The spirit escapes physical life, disengages itself from matter, traverses the surface of the Earth into the immensity. It searches for its loved ones, its parents, its friends, its spiritual guides. Sometimes it goes to meet other human souls, likewise disengaged from the flesh during sleep. An exchange of thoughts and views takes place among them. From these conversations, the spirit derives impressions which rarely impress the physical brain, on account of the latter's vibrational impotence. Instead they leave their imprint in our consciousness, in the form of intuitions and forewarnings, and have a greater influence than it is believed on the direction of our lives, inspiring our resolutions and our actions. Hence the proverb: "The night brings counsel."

In the July 1865 issue of the *Revue Spirite* (year 8, no. 7, pp. 208–209), Allan Kardec tells of the disengagement of a teenage woman's spirit during her sleep, who came all the way from Lyon (France) to Paris, in the midst of a Spiritist meeting in which her mother was present.

"Asked by a young woman's mother to give her news of her daughter, who was in Lyon, [the medium] saw her lying down and asleep, and accurately described the apartment where she rested. She was led here by a well-known spirit in the Spiritist community of Lyon, and even in the rest of Europe (the somnambulistic medium depicted the Spirit Carita). This spirit brought her with the aim of making her retain, if not a precise memory, at least an intuition of the good that can be derived from a firm, pure and holy belief ..."

"She said to her mother that if she could remember her former incarnations in her waking state so well as she could recall them now, she would not linger in the stationary state in which she currently found herself, for she could see clearly now and advance without hesitation, whereas in the ordinary state we are all blindfolded. She said to those present, 'Thank your for dealing with me.' Then she kissed her mother. How happy she was, added the medium in conclusion, for she was happy about this dream, of which she would have no recollection, but which would nevertheless leave a salutary impression on her!"[124]

Sometimes the soul, after being sufficiently purified and with guidance of angelic spirits, can reach the divine spheres, the world where all causes originate. From there it can hover over time and see the past unfold, even the

future. If it brings back into its human envelope a reflection of the impressions thus gathered, these can constitute the so-called prophetic dream.

In major instances, when the brain vibrates too weakly to be able to record the powerful or subtle impressions perceived by the spirit, and this latter wishes to retain memory of the instructions received on awakening, it creates by will pictures, figurative scenes and fluidic images adapted to the vibrational capacities of the physical brain, and through suggestive action projects them vigorously onto this organ. If necessary, if the spirit is unable to do it, then more advanced spirits will come to help, and the dream will take on an allegorical form.

Among the dreams of this kind some have become famous as, for example, the dream of Pharaoh interpreted by Joseph.[125]

Many people have allegorical dreams. These do not always translate the impressions directly gathered by the sleeper's spirit, but rather revelations coming from spirits responsible for guarding us.

Being very ill and having almost no hope of recovery, I once obtained, in a figurative sense, the announcement of my cure. In my dream, I walked painfully through a path covered in rubble. As I moved forward, the obstacles kept building up under my steps. Suddenly a wide and deep brook presents itself to my sight, forcing me to halt my walk. Feeling anxious, I sat on the edge; but then, from the other bank, an invisible hand directs toward me a plank whose end falls at my feet. I have only to fix it securely, and then use it to cross the stream. Beyond that, the road was free of obstacles and I could move forward with a firmer step in the midst of a smiling countryside.

Here is the meaning of this dream. Having learned some time afterwards, from a woman immersed in magnetic sleep, the cause of my malady – a common cause which no physician had been able to detect – as well as the remedies applicable, I gradually recovered my health and could resume work at my normal pace.

In dreams there often occur phenomena of premonition, that is to say, the faculty of certain sensitives to perceive future events in their sleep. Historical examples abound:

Plutarch (*Life of Caesar*) mentions the premonitory dream of Calpurnia, Julius Caesar's wife. At night she saw Brutus and Cassius plotting the murder of Caesar, then did everything she possibly could to prevent him from going to the Senate.

We can also see in Cicero (*De Divinatione*, I, 27) the dream of Simonides; in Valerius Maximus (VII, sect. I, 8) the premonitory dream of Aterius Rufus and that of King Croesus (VII, sect. II, 4), announcing the death of his son Athys.

In his *Commentaries* (trans. C. Cotton, London, 1674), Montluc reports that, on the eve of the event, a dream told him of the death of King Henry II who lost his life from the spear-thrust of Montgomery in a joust.

The Duke of Sully, in his *Memoirs* (Trans. C. Lennox, London, 1761, vol. III, Book XXVII, p. 207), affirms that France's Henry IV had the presentiment that he would be assassinated in a coach.

More recent facts, observed in large numbers, may be cited in support:

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln dreamed that he heard weeping and sobbing in an otherwise deadly calm place. He rose and went searching from room to room until he saw, in the middle of a room, a coffin resting on a stand containing a body wrapped in black, guarded by soldiers and surrounded by a crowd in tears. "Who is dead in the White House?" Lincoln asked. "The president," replied a soldier; "he was killed by an assassin!"[126]

At that moment a loud burst of grief from the crowd awoke him. Three days later, Lincoln was assassinated.

In his book *L'Inconnu – The Unknown*, C. Flammarion mentions seventy-six premonitory dreams, two of which were had by his mother (ch. IX, p. 424). Most of them bear the stamp of absolute authenticity.

One of the most remarkable cases is the one of former magistrate and deputy Mr Bérard (*ibid*., p. 429):

Forced by fatigue to go to sleep at a miserable inn in the midst of forested mountains, during a trip, he saw in his dream all the details of a murder that was to take place three years later in the very room where he was staying; and whose victim was Mr. Victor Arnaud, a lawyer. It was the remembrance of this dream that allowed Mr. Bérard to later identify the murderers.

This fact was also reported by Mr. M. F. Goron, ex-Chief of the Paris Detective Police, in his *Mémoires* (Paris, 1897, Part II, ch. X, p. 338).

The following may also be cited:

The dream of a coal-miner's wife who saw someone cut the ropes of the bucket or cage used to carry the miners down to the pits. The fact was verified the very next day, and several miners owed their lives to this dream warning (*L'Inconnu – The Unknown*, p. 426).

A young girl in a little town at La Charité-sur-Loire (Nièvre, France) saw in a dream a young man unknown to her then, whom she married afterwards. Thanks to this dream, she became Mrs. Émile de la Bédollière (*ibid.*, p. 427).

Another person was able to see in a dream the lottery numbers that would be drawn the next day or a few days later (*ibid*., p. 447).

Numerous people dreamed about cities, places and landscapes that they only came to know and visit later on (*ibid*., pp. 424–462).

One night, Mr. Henri Horet, a professor of music in Strasbourg (France), saw in a dream five coffins leave his house. Soon after, a gas leakage occurred in the house, in which five people died asphyxiated (*ibid.*, p. 343).

As for ethereal dreams, one can relate the phenomenon of ecstasy or rapture to them. Considered by some scholars and scientists, who lack competence in psychism, as a morbid state, ecstasy is indeed one of the most beautiful privileges of a loving and believing soul, which, in the exaltation of its faith, gathers all its energies, disengages momentarily from the fetters of the flesh, and springs into regions where Beauty unfolds itself in infinite manifestations.

During ecstasy the body becomes insensible. The soul, freed from its prison, focus all its life force, all its vision faculty, on one point. It is no longer of this world, but already participates in heavenly life.

The happiness experienced by ecstatics, the joy they have in contemplating the magnificence of the Hereafter, would alone suffice to show us the extent of the enjoyments which the spiritual spheres keep in store for us, when our heavy conceptions do not prevent us too often from understanding and foreseeing them.

Clairvoyance or divination is the faculty of the soul to perceive, in the waking state, past and future events both in the physical and in the intellectual world. This gift is exercised through time and distances, independently of all human sources of information.

Divination has been practiced at all times of humankind. Its role in the ancient world was considerable and, even with allowances made for cases of hallucination, error, and deceit, it is no longer possible, after the recent

discoveries of transcendental psychology, to reject en masse all facts attributed to prophets, oracles, and sibyls.

These strange manifestations had a resurgence in the Middle Ages:

Religious reformer Jean Huss announced, while burning at the stake, the coming of Luther.

From Domremy-sur-Meuse,[127] Joan of Arc had predicted the deliverance of Orleans and the coronation of France's Charles VII. She announced that she would be wounded outside of Orleans.

According to a letter written by the Clerk of the House of the Counts of Brabant, dated April 22, 1429, fifteen days before the event, and preserved in the archives of Brussels, she predicted that "she herself in a battle before Orleans would be wounded by a shaft but would not die of it, and that the King, in the course of the coming summer, would be crowned at Reims."[128] Later on, she prophesied her captivity and death.

In the trenches of Melun, her "voices" had warned her that she would be handed over to the English before St. John's Day. During her trial, she announced, seven years in advance, the complete expulsion of the English from France. Then, throughout her extraordinary life, there were prophecies of a more secondary order: at Chinon, the death of a soldier who mocked her and in the evening drowned himself in the river Vienne; in Orleans, the death of Captain Glasdale; the deliverance of Compiegne before the winter feast of St. Martin, etc.[129]

In our time, there have been many cases of clairvoyance of which a few will be mentioned below.

The French journal *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (Paris, 1896, pp. 205–211) reported that Lady A—, having been the victim of a theft in Paris, was able to find out its perpetrator, someone she would never have suspected, as well as all the intricate details of the theft, with the aid of a clairvoyant. The culprit turned out to be none other than Marchandon, one of her servants who, because of his good manners, had risen in her good graces and earned her trust. Afterwards he became the murderer of another employer, Mrs. Cornet.

A forewarning is an intuition, generally vague and confused, but sometimes also very clear, of what is about to happen.

The philosopher J. de Maistre stated that "humans are naturally informed with all useful truths."

On the morning of a battle, both soldiers and officers unmistakably feel their approaching death. An inquiry established that a nun of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul (Paris, France), on the eve of the tragic fire at the Bazar de la Charité (Charity Bazaar) on May 4, 1897, had announced that she would be burned to death there.

This faculty is frequently encountered in certain regions and countries, for example, in the Scottish Highlands, Brittany, Germany, and Italy. But, all around us, we may gather cases of forewarning supported by unambiguous testimony. They are so numerous that it would seem unnecessary to insist upon them. So allow me to mention only the following three cases:

Colonel Collet, in the *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Nancy* (Feb. 1902, p. 6), reports that his father-in-law, Mr. Vigneron, an experienced hunter and fisherman, used to go out almost every day to engage in his favorite pastimes, without causing any concerns to his wife. One day, however, having a presentiment that he would drown, she tried to prevent him from going fishing. But her husband took no notice of it and, upon returning in the evening, joked about her puerile fears.

The next day he confided secretly to his son-in-law that, as his boat had capsized, he was only able to get out of the water and the mud where he sank thanks to a hanging willow branch seized in time. Then he dried his clothes and cleaned them before returning home.

Dr. Paul Max Simon, in *Le Monde de Rêves* (Paris, Baillière, 1882, p. 93), recalls a fact of the same nature:

“A young doctor, coming to visit his parents one day, met two officers. He agreed with them to take the post coach. When it was time to get into the coach, our doctor was stopped by a supernatural power. The two officers having noticed an alteration in his features, asked him the cause: he told them. They offered to help him, but he refused, saying he could not decide to leave. They had scarcely left on their coach, when the impediment ceased to be felt. Hence the young doctor took the next opportunity to continue his journey. On reaching the banks of the Elbe, he noticed a small crowd. He was told then that the two officers had been drowned in the river where their coach and horses had fallen.”

Finally, one can read in *The Annals of Psychical Science* (vol. 2, no. 3, 1905, p. 195) the account of a case published in the newspaper *Il Messaggero*, of Rome:

“Marino Tonelli, aged 27, is an egg-merchant ... On the evening of June 13th ... he returned home in his little cart ... It would seem that the young man had almost fallen asleep, for, on reaching a spot known as the Costa di Borgo, [130] where the road is winding and very steep, he felt a smart shock, and, on opening his eyes, found himself lying in a field by the side of the road, at the bottom of a small ravine, down which he had rolled ... After making sure that be was not injured, the young man went to the relief of the animal, and, with the aid of some persons who had come up, got the cart out of the ravine, into which it had meanwhile fallen.”

“While this work of rescue was going on there appeared before the eyes of Mr. Tonelli the figure of a woman who ... seemed to be his mother. The young man was greatly astonished, but could no longer doubt that it was she when he also heard her well-known voice and felt himself embraced by the old woman, who, weeping for sympathy, asked if he had hurt himself, and added:”

“Do you know, I saw you! I could not get to sleep; your wife and the two little ones had been asleep a good while, but I felt agitated and extraordinarily uneasy, in a way that was new to me, and that I could not understand. Suddenly I saw appear before me this road, this exact spot, with the ravine at the side; I saw your cart overturn and you thrown out into the field; you called to me and begged for help ... Finally, I felt irresistibly impelled to come here, and, without arousing anyone, nerving myself against the fear of solitude, the dark, and the stormy weather, here I am after a walk of four kilometers ...”

“The correspondent of the *Messaggero* ends by saying, ‘Such is the fact, such is the exact story that I gathered from the lips, still trembling with emotion, of these good people.’”

According to an inquiry made by Prof. A. Francisci, “The mother’s anxiety preceded the vision of the accident by some hours, and the vision preceded the accident by some three-quarters of an hour, that is to say, the time necessary to traverse on foot the distance of four or five kilometers between the Tonellis’ house and the spot called Costa di Borgo.”

Forewarnings, premonitions or presentments are difficult to analyze from a scientific viewpoint. They can only be explained in certain cases, when the event has subjective or objective precedents. But in most cases, nothing in the announced facts lends itself to the idea of succession or a linked sequence.

Where does the power of certain souls to read the future come from? This is an obscure and profound question causing a sense of vertigo like an abyss, and posed not without trouble, for instinctively we feel that this question is almost insoluble by our feeble science.

Just like every orb revolving in space through the night communicates with the great family of stars through the laws of universal magnetism, so the human soul, as a spark emanating from the divine source, can communicate with the great eternal Soul and receive instructions, inspirations, and sudden bouts of enlightenment from it.

Skeptics may laugh at this explanation. But is it not from our ascension toward God that we derive the living forces, the spiritual aid, and all that make us greater and better? Each and everyone one of us has, in the depths of our being, an exit opening out onto the infinite. When we are in a state of psychical disengagement, our dreams, ecstasy, trance, the whole range of our perceptions can be incalculably enlarged. We come into contact with the immense hierarchy of souls and celestial powers. Step by step, the spirit can go back as far as the cause of causes, the divine intelligence to which past, present and future are merged into a whole; and which, from the ensemble of known facts, can deduce all consequences.

XIV

Psychical sight and hearing in the waking state

Psychical sight and hearing in the waking state are related to exteriorization phenomena inasmuch as that they require a partial out-of-body experience of the percipient. Here it is no longer a question of physiological phenomena or manifestations of a living being at a distance, but rather one form of mediumship.

From the Spiritist standpoint, the soul of a sensitive is already partially exteriorized, that is to say, out of his or her material organism. The former's own faculty of vision is added to the physical sense of sight. Sometimes the substitution of the psychical sense for the physical one is complete. This proves that, in some cases, a medium can see with eyes shut. I myself have often witnessed this phenomenon.

Clairvoyance and mediumistic vision must be carefully distinguished. It just so happens that somnambulistic mediums, very clear-sighted as regards the things and beings of this world, are struck with blindness in all that concerns the world of spirits. This is due to the nature of the fluidic radiations of their exteriorized envelope, and to the type of training that the magnetizer makes them undergo. It is what differentiates the state of simple clear-sightedness from that of mediumship. In the latter case it is no longer human magnetism that intervenes. The seeing medium is under the influence of a spirit that acts upon him or her for the purpose of the manifestation at hand. By inducing a state of partial disengagement from the body in the medium, the spirit then provides the percipient with spiritual vision.

As we have seen, the psychical sense is much more subtle than the physical sense. It can perceive radiations, forms, and combinations of matter which escape normal vision. To make its apparition more distinct, the spirit often resorts to partial materialization. It renders itself visible or tangible by means of forces borrowed from the incarnate participants. Under such conditions, its fluidic form can enter the visual field of the medium, and in

certain cases even impress a photographic plate.

Seeing mediums describe spirits with details that can all serve as control elements. Then photography may be used to confirm both the accuracy of the description and the identity of the spirits that have manifested themselves. These are often unknown to the mediums. In our group of psychical studies in Tours (France),[131] from the years 1897 to 1900, we had three seeing, hearing and “incorporation” (psychophonic) mediums. Before falling asleep, after the room was darkened, they used to perceive next to each of the sitters the spirits of relatives or friends evoked by them, and then were able to described them minutely, regardless of knowing them beforehand or seeing them for the first time. In this case, the descriptions were such that, according to deportment or garment, the members of the group could easily establish the spirit’s identity. Moreover, the mediums were able to hear and transmit the words of the spirits and what they wished to express. The impression produced on the seeing mediums varied very sensibly according to the development of their respective mediumistic faculties, or to the spirits’ degrees of elevation. Where a medium would discern only a brilliant spot or a flame, another could see a radiant form. The same applies to hearing. It varied in precision and intensity from sensitive to sensitive. Where one detected only a vague sound, a mere vibration, another could hear a soft and penetrating harmony which touched the medium even to tears.[132]

History is full of phenomena of sights and apparitions. In Judea, the shadow of Samuel exhorts Saul. In the ancient Roman world, phantasms appeared to Numa, Brutus, and Pompey. The annals of Christianity are also rich in facts of this kind.[133]

In the Middle Ages, the most remarkable cases of sight and hearing were those of Joan of Arc. It is always to this incomparable maiden, the most admirable medium that the West has produced, that we must resort when we wish to cite striking proofs of the intervention of the unseen world in our history.

The whole life of this heroic woman is filled with spirit apparitions and voices always consistent and true to themselves. In the valleys of Domremy, on the battlefields, standing before her examiners at Poitiers or her judges at

Rouen, everywhere the spirits assisted and inspired her. Their voices echoed in her ears, setting her daily tasks, giving her life a precise direction and a glorious goal. They announced future events which were all fulfilled. In her painful captivity, these voices comforted and encouraged her: “Take all in your stride; have no care for your martyrdom; in the end you will come to the kingdom of paradise.”[134] And the judges to whom she made these statements seemed worried about this prediction, whose meaning they understood.

To all the perfidious and insidious questions that were asked of her, the voices dictated the answers; and if it was delayed, she declared, “To all the perfidious and insidious questions that were asked of her, the voices dictated the answers; and if it was delayed, she declared, “I shall refer it to them for their advice.”

When the voices were silent and she was left to herself, she was no more than a girl. Then she would weaken, retract, submit herself. But during the night the voice was heard again. And she repeated to her judges: “The voice told me that it would be a sin to abjure; what I have done, was well done.”

In certain sensitives, visions are produced only by means of objects upon which a spirit’s thoughts are focused in the form of images or scenes – for example, on a glass of water, a mirror, or a sheet of glass. When the spirit is powerless to make the medium’s brain vibrate or to induce sufficient exteriorization, it impregnates with fluids the objects we have just mentioned. It then produces, by will, images and very clear scenes that the medium can describe in the smallest details, and which other sitters are also able to see.[135]

The following is a most remarkable case, highlighted by the British journal *Light* of February 16, 1901 (vol. XXI, no. 1049, pp. 79-81). The spirit of a murdered man retrieves his body, first by means of vision in the crystal, and then directly by means of a medium’s psychical senses:

Mr. Percy Foxwell, a stockbroker, residing at Thames Ditton, near London, left home on the morning of December 20, 1900 to go to his office in the City. He never reappeared alive. When his disappearance was confirmed, police launched a lengthy and meticulous investigation but to no avail.

Feeling desperate, Mrs. Foxwell had recourse to a medium, Mr. von

Bourg, who obtained in his crystal a vision of the stockbroker in life, followed by one of his dead body plunged in water.

In another sitting, the medium saw a spirit standing next to Mrs. Foxwell, and persistently holding up a watch in a chain with peculiar things hanging from it, upon which a name was engraved. By the description Mrs. Foxwell recognized her husband and the watch which would later help identify the body. The spirit requested that they went looking for its body, and promised to lead the medium to the place where it was thrown into the water.

They met once again on a set day, and this time the spirit, by the hand of Mr. von Bourg, drew a plan and showed in writing the way and directions they should take. Accompanied by several friends of the deceased, the mediums went on this path, traversing its winding route. They now felt very strongly the impact of the blows experienced by the deceased victim. On reaching the very spot where the victim had been struck, one medium almost fainted. They had to follow several paths, bypass houses, cross fields, and scramble through fences, just as the murderers had done. Whenever they hesitated as to which route to take, the mediums Mr. von Bourg and Mr. Knowles, “could plainly see the spirit just in front of them, indicating the direction.” At last they came to the edge of a field with a deep stream of fairly calm water. The mediums exclaimed: “This is what we have seen!” But night had fallen and they had to go back to their departure point.

The next day, a search was carried out. Men equipped with poles probed the bottom of the creek. Shortly afterwards, a little way below the point they had indicated, and close to where the stream joined the Thames, a corpse was seen floating in the water. A watch found on the sad cadaver enabled it to be identified as the body of Mr. Foxwell. Six weeks in the water had decomposed the flesh. The body was dressed exactly as the mediums had described. It was possible to ascertain its identity not only because of the engraved watch with its trinkets, but also by certain peculiar marks on the teeth, etc.

Prof. Pyrrhus Bessi gives an account of another phenomenon of spontaneous vision which he witnessed in a haunted house in Umbria (Italy), as published in the French journal *Revue des Études Psychiques* (2nd Series, Year 1, no. IV and V, April–May 1901, pp. 99–102 and 108). The case is all the more remarkable since the professor, as acknowledged by himself, was absolutely refractory to any kind of Spiritist idea:

He was alone at a late hour of the night, writing the last pages of a brochure he was about to publish, when his lamp suddenly died away. The room, however, was lighted by a faint grayish gleam. In front of him, an ice reflected an even more vivid light, and with it a room and furniture unknown to him. An old lady, seated at a table, wrote slowly, with a very absorbed air, and then enclosed the written sheet in an envelope, which she put into a drawer. Lastly, she leaned her head against the back of the armchair and seemed to fall asleep. The light vanished and the vision disappeared.

A few hours later the professor learned of the death of an aunt of his wife, who had been found dead in an armchair, and in the drawer of the table her handwritten will was discovered.

“From Mr. Bessi’s answers to my questions,” said Mr. César de Vesme, director of the *Revue des Études Psychiques*, “it follows that he had his vision some time before midnight and that the lady was found dead in the early hours of the morning.” The agent, therefore, would have been the deceased woman herself, supported by some hidden assistance; and since Mr. Bessi alone was awake in the house at the time of the manifestation; it was he who witnessed it.

The organ of hearing, under conditions identical to the phenomenon of vision, can also be influenced by the spirits. F. W. H. Myers reports the following fact:[136]

Lady Caidly, as she was having a bath, being locked up and undressed, heard a strange and distinct voice saying, ‘Unbolt the door!’ She was startled and looked in vain on all sides. When she was in the bath, she heard the voice repeat three times successively, with increasing insistence: ‘Unbolt the door!’ Then she got out of her bathtub and pulled out the bolt. But as she went back into the bath, she lost consciousness and fell, head beneath the water. Fortunately, in her fall, she was able to pull a bell cord. Her maid came running. Had the door still been locked, she would have infallibly been drowned.

Mr. François Coppée, the French academic poet, heard a mysterious voice several times. This is what author Jules Bois tells us in his inquiry entitled *L’Au-delà et les Forces Inconnues* [*Unknown Forces and the World Beyond*] (Paris, Ollendorff, 1902, pp. 56–58).

“It is always when I am in bed,” writes the poet, “and shortly after I have put out the light, that the phenomenon is produced. I can distinctly hear ... a

voice calling me by my surname: ‘Coppée!’”

“I am certainly not asleep at that moment; and proof of it is that, in spite of the strong emotion and accelerated heartbeat that I feel then, I always ... immediately reply: ‘Who is there? Who is talking to me?’ But never did the voice add anything to its call.”

“That voice is unknown to me. It does not remind me of my father’s voice, or of my mother’s voice, or the voice of any other person to whom I was particularly dear, or have loved, and who is no more. But it is, I repeat, clear and distinct; and – what is quite remarkable and, I may assure you, frightening – it always seems by the intonation it gives to that word – my surname, pure and simple – it seems, mark you, to respond to the feeling that is moving through me at that very moment.”

“I have heard this voice only very rarely and under very serious moral circumstances in my life, when I felt sorry or displeased with myself. And yet, always the voice has taken a tone of complaint or reproach, seeming to sympathize with my sorrow or blame my bad feeling. And here is another certainty that I do not hear this voice in a dream: it has never spoken to me except precisely when I was kept awake by my worries.”

In certain mediums, the psychical sense can grasp spirits’ most subtle vibrations and even perceive the penetrating harmonies coming from spiritual planes and worlds, veritable concerts of celestial spirits. Sometimes this hearing faculty may extend to all those present.

In her book *Modern American Spiritualism* (New York, the author’s own edition, 1870, ch. V, p. 57), Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten informs us that Mrs. Tamlin was the first American medium through whom, “the guitar and other instruments were played, without visible contact, so as to recognize tunes,” with the utmost perfection. The sounds varied from the most powerful to the mildest. At times, they recalled the chords of a wind harp. It seemed as if the sounds were going to turn into a human voice of exquisite sweetness.

Since then, phenomena like these have occurred in very different environments.

During the celebrated seances given by Jesse Shepard in all the great capital cities and before many royal courts; as well as those of Dr. Sant’Angelo, in Rome, where celestial choirs and chords of many invisible instruments were heard, and the solo voices allowed those present to recognize several singers who had long passed away.[137]

Almost all great composers are sensitives, hearing or inspired mediums, as is proved by their own testimony.

One finds in Goethe (*Goethe's Correspondence with a Child*, trans. Bettina von Arnim, Boston, Ticknor & Fields, 1861, p. 285) the following details about Beethoven:

Beethoven, speaking of the source whence came the conception of his masterpieces, once said to Bettina:

"I feel myself compelled to let the melody stream forth on all sides – I follow it – passionately overtake it again – I see it escape me, vanish amidst the crowd of varied excitements – soon I seize upon it again with renewed passion; I cannot part from it, – with quick rapture I multiply it in every form of modulation – and at the last moment I triumph over the first musical thought, – see now – that's a Symphony ..."

"I have no friend: I must live with myself alone, but I well know that God is nearer to me in my art than to others ... Music is the only unembodied entrance into a higher sphere of knowledge."

After composing his sweetest melodies, he would exclaim: "I have had a rapture!"

Mozart, for his part, in a letter to a close friend, introduces us to the mysteries of musical inspiration:[138]

"You say you should like to know my way of composing, and what method I follow in writing works of some extent. I can really say no more on this subject than the following, for I myself know no more about it, and cannot account for it."

"When I am, as it were, completely myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer ... it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how they come, I know not, nor can I force them."

At the decline of his life, when the shadow of death lay already upon him, in a moment of calm and perfect serenity, he called one of his friends who was in his room:[139] "Listen," he said, "I can hear music." His friend replied, "I hear nothing." But Mozart, still raptured, continued to perceive the celestial harmonies. Then his pale face lighted up and he quoted the testimony of St. John: "and I heard music in heaven."

That happened while he was still composing his *Requiem*. When he finished it, he called his daughter and said, "Come, dearest, my task is over, my *Requiem* is finished!" His daughter then sang some stanzas and, stopping

at the melancholy, deep notes of the piece, she turned softly to seek the approving smile of her father, but instead only found the calm and rested smile of death. Mozart was no longer of this world.[140]

Massenet, talking about his symphonic poem *Visions*, performed in Leeds (UK) in 1898, wrote these lines reproduced in the journal *Light* (vol. XV, p. 538, London, Nov. 9, 1895):

“There is something more or less experimental in the work, and I want its first hearers to have no preconceived ideas about it at all.”

“I was traveling across the Simplon not very long ago, and, having reached that little hotel right in the middle of the pass, thought I would spend a few days in quiet there.”

“I settled down for a little rest, but the very first morning, as I was sitting quite alone in that wonderful mountain stillness, I heard a voice! Was it real? I cannot tell. What did it sing? I cannot tell. But always this strange, spiritual voice sang in my ears, and a dream took possession of me, born of the voice and the mountain solitude.” Like Mozart, Massenet received his inspirations from without, independently of his will.

It can be said that intervention from above, communion of Heaven and Earth, asserts itself in a thousand ways through creations of thought and genius for the triumph of beauty, in the realization of the divine ideal.

This is a truth of all time. So far it has been little understood, but some light has been shed on the subject. Soon humanity will advance with more confidence on this fertile path. Communion between mortals and inspiring spirits will become more effective and conscious, and human work will gain in strength and greatness.

XV
Psychical force, The Fluids, Magnetism

The study of spiritual phenomena has made known to us, states of matter and conditions of life that science had long ignored. We have learned that, beyond the gaseous state and even the radiant state discovered by W. Crookes, matter, which becomes unseen and imponderable, is found in increasingly subtle forms that we refer to as *fluids*. As it becomes rarefied, it acquires new properties, a power of increasing radiation, and becomes one of the forms of energy. It is under this aspect that it reveals itself in most of the experiments that will be discussed in the following chapters.

When a spirit manifests itself in a human environment, it can only do so with the aid of a force borrowed from the mediums and the gathered assembly.

This force is generated by people's fluidic bodies. It has at times been designated by the names of odic, magnetic, neural (or neuritic), and etheric force. I call it *psychical force*, because it obeys the will of the individual. This is the driving force behind it; one's limbs and members are the driving agents; it emerges more particularly from the fingers and the brain.

There exists within each of us an invisible focal point whose radiations will vary in amplitude and intensity according to our mental dispositions. The will can impart special properties to them; and therein lies the secret of the healing power of magnetizers.

In fact, it was to these latter that this force first revealed itself, in its therapeutic applications. Its nature was studied by Baron Karl von Reichenbach, who named it *od*, or *odic force*, whereas W. Crookes, for his part, was the first to measure its intensity.[141]

Physical effects mediums can exteriorize abundant amounts of this force; however, we all possess it to varying degrees. It is by means of this force that

the rising of tables off the ground, displacement of objects without visible contact, apport[142] phenomena, direct writing on slates, etc. are made possible. Its action is present in all spirit manifestations.

The emanations of the human body are luminous, colored with various hues, as reported by sensitives, whose sight they impress in the darkened room. Some mediums can see them even in full light, escaping from the hands of magnetizers. They were analyzed using the spectroscope, and their wavelengths were determined according to each color.

These emanations form concentric layers around the individual, which constitute a kind of fluidic atmosphere. This is the so-called aura of Occultists, or human photosphere. It explains the phenomenon of exteriorization of sensibility, established by numerous experiments made by Col. Rochas d'Aiglun, Dr. Luys, Dr. Paul Joire, etc.[143]

Dr. H. Baraduc built a device, called a *biometer*, by which he has been able to measure psychical strength.

This device consisted of a copper needle suspended by a silk thread above a ciphered dial. The whole is arranged under a glass globe, sheltered from the air and external influences. Under these conditions, the needle can be influenced without contact, through the glass wall, by the radiations escaped from the hand of an experimenter placed at a distance. This process results in deviations of the needle which vary from 40 to 75 degrees in both directions, the needle being attracted or repelled according to the person's state of health or mental disposition. Usually the right hand attracts and the left one repels.

This invisible force can influence the needle through a 4-inch thick ice block, through mica, alumina, collodion insulator plates, and so on.

In the space of ten years, Dr. Baraduc[144] applied himself to more than two thousand experiments, which enabled him to establish with the most rigorous exactness the existence of this force and the extent to which it is emitted, or attracted, depending on the richness or indigence of each individual's nature. [145]

Under the name of *stenometer*, Dr. Joire invented an apparatus that provides similar results.

The experiments held by W. Crookes are even more demonstrative. Working in his own laboratory with the medium Daniel Dunglas Home, this prominent scientist used a weighing machine of great accuracy. The medium's hand was able to influence the apparatus, without contact, to the

point of obtaining deviations from one of the plates and increases in weight of up to 8 pounds. These experiments were repeated several times under the most rigorous control, in the presence of different witnesses, by means of an extremely sensible apparatus built up with utmost care. All precautions have been taken to exclude any possibility of fraud.[146]

Radiations of the psychical force can be photographed. If, in complete darkness, the hand is placed upon a sensitive plate immersed in the developer bath, after a few minutes of exposure, it can be seen that the plate is impressed. If the fingers have adhered to it, from the stain formed by each of them, as well as from many focal points, we see spiraled undulations detached and irradiated in all directions. This shows that psychical force, like ultraviolet rays or Roentgen rays, can act upon silver salts.

This phenomenon was demonstrated for the first time in 1872 with experiments carried out by Misters Beattie[147] and Taylor, Dr. Thompson, Prof. Wagner, and so on. Col. Rochas d'Aiglun obtained it during his experiments with Mrs. Lux.[148]

The plate, placed dry on the forehead, heart or hand, reproduces the radiations according to the intensity of the subject's thoughts, feelings or emotions. Anger, pain, ecstasy, prayer, love, all have their specific radiations.[149]

Thus, the photographic plate, this "gaze upon the invisible," becomes the irrefutable witness of the radiation of the human soul.

For long flatly denied by scholarly and scientific bodies, just like blood flow, vaccination, antiseptic practices, and so many other discoveries had formerly been denied by them, magnetism, albeit as ancient as the world itself, only eventually penetrated the scientific realm under the name of hypnotism.

Their processes are admittedly different from one another. In hypnotism, it is by suggestion that one acts upon the subject, first to plunge him or her into sleep, then to induce phenomena. Suggestion is merely the subordination of one's will to that of another person. The subject abandons himself or herself to the experimenter, executing the latter's orders, expressed by words and gestures, or simply by thought. The same result can be obtained by

employing magnetism practices. The only difference is in the means employed. Those used by hypnotists are rather invasive. If they can cure certain affections – and it cannot be denied that their application in therapeutics has yielded appreciable results – most often they throw disorder into the nervous system and, over time, may unbalance the subject; whereas magnetic emanations, when well directed either in the waking state or in sleep, frequently bring harmony back into troubled organisms.

Suggestion, as we have seen, can be exerted from near or afar upon the visible as well as the invisible plane, whether by human operators or hidden agents. By allowing a human being to act mentally upon another, without the help of the senses, it makes us better understand the action of the mind on a medium. Indeed, what humans can obtain, whose power and action are limited, hindered, and diminished, an intelligent being freed from the hindrances of coarse matter, will do all the better, and succeed in influencing a sensitive, inspiring him or her, and using him or her to accomplish its own views.

Magnetism, taken in its general sense, is the use, under the name of *fluids*, of psychical force by those who are abundantly provided with it.

The action of magnetic fluids is demonstrated by so numerous and convincing examples, that only ignorance or bad faith would deny their existence today. The following case may be cited among thousands:[150]

Mr. E. Boirac, rector of the Academy of Grenoble (France), was vice-president of the Hypnotic Society for Hypnosis, in Paris, and abandoned hypnosis in favor of magnetism as a result of the following experiment: Coming home one day in the afternoon, he found his servant asleep. Mr. Boirac saw him from the landing where he was, and the idea occurred to him of attempting a magnetic experiment. From the place he was, he extended his right hand in the direction and at the height of the sleeper’s feet. After a minute or two, having raised his hand, he saw with amazement the servant’s feet rise and follow the upward movement of his hand. He repeated the experiment several times, and in each case the results were identical.

The will to relieve and heal, as mentioned earlier, lends curative properties to magnetic fluids. The remedy to our ills is in ourselves. Good, healthy individuals can act upon weak and suffering beings, regenerating them through breath blowing, the laying on of hands, and even by means of objects impregnated with his energy. The most usual action is by means of gestures,

called *passes*, which may be swift or slow, longitudinal or transverse, depending on the calming or stimulating effect one wishes to produce in the patient. This treatment should continue regularly, and sessions renewed every day, until the cure is complete.

Through self-magnetization, you can also be self-treated with the aid of passes or by rubbing the weakened organs while you are partially disengaged from the physical body, and impregnating them with currents of force escaping from your own hands.

Ardent faith, willpower, prayer, and the evocation of higher powers, can give support both to the operator and the subject. When both are united in thought and heart, the healing action becomes more intense.

The exaltation of faith, which causes a sort of dilation of the psychical being and makes it more accessible to the influx from above, which leads us to admit and allows us to explain some extraordinary cures carried out at places of pilgrimage and religious sanctuaries. There are numerous cases of cure backed by testimonies which are too important to be all rejected as doubtful. They are not exclusive to this or that religion; we find them indistinctly in the most diverse circles: Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Hindus, and others.

When stripped of any theatricality and all ulterior motives, and practiced only for the sake of charitable love, magnetism becomes the medicine of the humble and believers, of the family man and the mother of their children, in short, of all those who know how to love. Its application is within easy reach. It requires only self-confidence and faith in the infinite power that radiates strength and life everywhere. Like Christ and the apostles, like the saints, prophets and magi, each and every one of us can lay on hands and heal, if we have love for our fellow human beings, and an ardent will to bring relief to them.

When the patient falls asleep under magnetic influence and seems receptive to suggestion, make use of the latter only with gentle and kind words. Persuade instead of brusquely demand. In all circumstances, gather in silence, alone with the patient. Appeal to the benevolent spirits which hover over wherever there is human suffering. Then, from above, you will feel an influx descend into you and then reach the subject. A regenerative wave will penetrate of itself into the cause of the evil and, by prolonging and renewing your action, you will have contributed to lighten the burden of earthly

miseries.

When one considers all the power of healing magnetism and the services it has already rendered to humankind, one cannot protest too strongly against the tendency of public authorities in certain countries to impede its free exercise. In doing so they violate the most respectable principles, trampling under their feet the sacred rights of suffering. Magnetism is a gift of nature and from God. It is a good thing to regulate its use and curb abuses. To prohibit its application is to encroach upon divine action, attack freedom and the progress of science, while pursuing a policy of obscurantism.

Magnetism is not only limited to therapeutic action. It has a much greater scope. It is a power that releases the bonds of the soul and opens the doors of the unseen world to the latter; it is a force that is dormant within us and that, if properly used and enhanced by gradual training, with a firm and persistent will, can free us from the burden of the flesh, emancipate us from the laws of time and space, and give us power over nature and other beings.

Magnetic sleep has degrees which can rise and range from light sleep to ecstasy and trance. Col. Rochas d'Aiglun considers the first three degrees to be superficial, constituting the state of hypnosis. Suggestion is applicable at these stages. However, as soon as one adds magnetizing processes to those of hypnosis, superior phenomena ensue: catalepsy, somnambulism, and trance. In the first case, it is the state favorable to spirit manifestations, such as spirit materializations, apparitions of glowing lights, hands, phantasms, etc. In the second case, it is clear-sightedness, the state of second sight which allows the medium to guide the magnetizer in his or her healing action, describing the nature of diseases, indicating remedies, etc.[151]

In the higher states of somnambulism, the subject escapes the action of the magnetizer and regains his or her own freedom, own spiritual life. The greater the disengagement of the fluidic body, the more inert the physical body becomes, entering a state similar to death. At the same time, thoughts and sensations are refined, disgust of earthly life appears. Then the return to the physical organism causes painful scenes, bouts of tears, bitter regrets.

The world of fluids, more than any other, is subject to the laws of

attraction. Using our will, we draw to ourselves good or bad forces, attuned to our thoughts and feelings. A formidable use may be made of it; but those who use magnetic power for evil purposes, will see it turn sooner or later against themselves. Any pernicious influence exerted on others in the form of spells, bewitchment, and the evil eye, will inevitably go back to those who generated them.

In hypnotism, as in magnetism, if the operator lacks pure intentions and integrity, experimentation will present dangers for both the operator and the subject.

So avoid approaching this field without purity of heart and charitable love. Never put magnetic forces in motion without adding the inner impulsion of prayer and a thought of sincere love for your fellow humans. Thus you will bring your fluids in harmony with the divine dynamism, rendering your action more effective and profound.

Through elevated magnetism – that of the great therapists, and of the initiates – thought is illuminated under the influx from above, and noble sentiments are exalted. A feeling of calmness, strength and serenity penetrates us. The soul feels all the pettiness of the human self gradually vanish, and reappears in the higher aspects of its nature. At the same time that it learns to forget itself for the sake and salvation of others, it feels awakening in itself resources hitherto unknown.

May the magnetism of good be developed on Earth by generous aspirations and the elevation of souls! Let us remember that every idea carries in itself the seed of its accomplishment; also let us impart to our fluidic vibrations the radiance of lofty and noble thoughts. May all earthly souls be connected to one another by a potent current that unites them to their elder siblings on the spiritual plane! Then evil influences, which retard humanity’s march toward progress, will vanish under the radiations of self-sacrifice and love.

XVI

Spontaneous phenomena, Haunted houses

TYPTOLOGY[152]

A methodical and rigorous classification imposes itself as a first necessity as soon as one approaches the study of Spiritist manifestations. At first sight, there seems to be an innumerable mass of facts which may cause some confusion. But when we examine them closely, while tracking the development of modern Spiritualism for half a century, we realize that these facts have been graduated and sequenced, following a set outline, a precise method, so as to highlight the cause that produced them. Initially vague and muddled in the phenomena of haunted houses, hidden personalities began to assert themselves through typology and then through writing. They became even more evident through mediumistic “incorporation” (psychophony), and visible and tangible through materialization. It is in this order that phenomena have unfolded, gradually multiplying so as to attract the attention of the indifferent, to force skeptics to admit them, and demonstrate to each and every one of us the survival of the human soul.

This order, which may be called historical, will be adopted in this chapter, devoted to the study of spiritual phenomena. These could also be divided into two categories, namely, physical and intellectual phenomena. In the former, the medium plays a passive role: he or she is the focal point of emission, from which emanate the fluids and the energies with the aid of which the unseen will act upon matter and manifest their presence. In the latter, the medium plays a more important role: he or she is the transmitting agent of the spirit’s thoughts, and sometimes, as we have seen earlier, the medium’s psychical state, aptitudes and knowledge may considerably influence the communications obtained.

The history of modern Spiritualism began with a case of haunting. The

manifestations that took place at a haunted house in Hydesville (USA) in 1848, and the tribulations of the Fox family, who lived there, are well known, so only a brief summary should suffice here.

Every night, an invisible intelligent being was revealed by means of violent and continuous noises, opening and closing doors, rocking the furniture, and pulling covers from beds. Cold and rough hands seized the young Fox sisters, and the floor oscillated under them by an unknown action.

By rapping on the walls – each letter of the alphabet corresponding to a set number of raps – this intelligent being claimed to have lived on Earth. It spelled its name as Charles Rosna. He claimed to have been an itinerant peddler and entered into many details about his tragic demise, which no one knew anything about, and the accuracy of his narrative was attested by the discovery of human bones in the basement, at the exact spot designated by his spirit as being where he was buried, after being murdered.[153]

These bones were mingled with charcoal and lime debris, which further demonstrated a clear intention of removing all trace of the sinister event.

A curious mob flocked; the cottage soon became too small to contain the crowd coming from all quarters. There were up to five hundred people gathered to hear the rappings.

It is through this new and strange manifestation to those who witnessed it, in a cottage at a poor village in the State of New York, in presence of persons of modest condition, that the secret of death was revealed by an invisible being, in the silence of night. For the first time in modern history, a small gleam filtered through the door which separates the world of the living from the world of the deceased.[154]

Due to its spontaneous and unexpected nature, and the moving circumstances that surround it, this manifestation escapes all explanations and arguments which have been put forward against Spiritism. Suggestion as well as hallucination, or even the unconscious, are powerless to account for it. The Fox family were well reputed members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose services they regularly attended. Raised in the strictest religious practice, all family members were totally unaware of the possibility of such phenomena, and nothing had prepared them for those events.

Far from deriving any advantage from them, they suffered a series of troubles and persecutions because of these spirit manifestations. They lost peace and health. Their personal reputation and finances were destroyed.

Notwithstanding all their efforts to ward them off, despite their precipitate departure and a change of residence, phenomena followed them relentlessly, and they could not escape the action of the spirits. Repeated injunctions of the unseen instructed them that it was necessary to make the manifestations public, face the arena at the Corinthian Hall in Rochester (NY), and suffer the outrageous harshness of several committees of examination, and the affronts of a hostile public, to prove the possibility of communication between the seen and the unseen worlds.

Let us go back to the haunted cottage at Hydesville. Charles Rosna was not alone in appearing there. A large number of spirits of all conditions, departed relatives or friends of those present, had intervened, responding by raps to the questions asked, spelling their names, providing accurate and unexpected indications of their own identity, giving explanations about the phenomena being produced and how to obtain them, which led to the formation of the first circles or groups, where these facts were studied and induced by means of tables, planchettes[155] and other material objects.

Rapping spirits declared that they did not act on their own initiative. These manifestations, they said, were willed and directed by higher order spirits, philosophers and scholars, themselves executors of orders from above, with a view to a vast and important revelation soon to be extended to the entire world.

Indeed, the intervention of these spirits and, among others, the spirit of Dr. Benjamin Franklin was noted several times. Later on, during the materializations of Estelle Livermore[156] in New York City, the spirit of Benjamin Franklin was also visible and promptly recognized by several people.

Soon, spirit manifestations grew more numerous and spread further afield. They conquered the whole United States of America, from city to city, state to state. The mediumistic power revealed itself to a great number of people from all walks of life, even amidst wealthy and influential families, without any suspicion of fraud.

At first, there was a great deal of trial and error, and confusion. The invisible agents were not always serious; frivolous and backward spirits were interfering in the seances, dictating childish, absurd communications, engaging in all sorts of ramblings and eccentricities, although important phenomena and messages of real value were also obtained, as attested by the

Reverend Ashahel H. Jervis, a Methodist minister in Rochester (NY), Dr. Langworthy, Mr. Robert T. Shannon, and others.[157] All these facts were useful in the sense that they helped create awareness of the various aspects related to the unseen world. Thanks to these errors and disappointments, experience in hidden things could be acquired, and light was gradually shed on the conditions of life in the Hereafter.

The new Spiritualist movement became permanent and ubiquitous. It may be said that Spiritism did not start from a fixed point; it rather spontaneously sprang from all Western countries, independently of human initiative, and continued its course, despite obstacles of all kinds posed by ignorance and malicious prejudices. From the moment of its inception, it was met with opposition from all the constituted powers, all public influences and worldly authorities. Meanwhile, it was supported only by a few humble servants of truth, mostly obscure individuals, who in turn were backed by an invisible legion. Nothing could be more touching than the exhortations and advices given to the Fox sisters by their protective spirits; recommendations without which those shy and trembling young women would never have dared to face the menacing audience or endure, at the peril of their own lives, the tumultuous scenes that ensued at the Corinthian Hall.

All the insults, calumnies, and delirious attacks unleashed by the press served above all to attract public attention to these strange phenomena, which ended up demonstrating to serious observers that there were causes at play which transcended human will. A plan unfolded that was drawn by powerful and elusive hands, a plan which nothing would be able to deter.

Several individuals, eminent for their knowledge, character and position, soon got involved in the new Spiritualist movement. Reverend S. B. Brittain, Dr. R. Hallock, Dr. Griswold, Professors Robert Hare and Mapes, Judge John W. Edmonds, Governor N. P. Tallmadge, Congressman and Diplomat R. Dale Owen and others, all studied phenomena closely and at length, having publicly affirmed the intervention of spirits. To list all their experiments, or to cite their testimonies, would fall outside the scope of this study. These can be

found in the remarkable book published by Mrs. Emma Hardinge. Only a few attestations regarding some extraordinary physical phenomena are excerpted below.

The Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, former governor of Wisconsin, describes a levitation phenomenon in Washington, as follows:[158]

“The square table required was of cherry, with four legs – a large-sized tea-table. Being brought out and the leaves raised I took my seat in the center, the three ladies sitting at the sides with their hands and arms resting on it and thus adding to the two hundred pounds weight already on it. Two legs were first raised from the floor, then the other two to a level with the first, until the whole table was held suspended in the air about six inches from the floor. While thus seated on it, I could feel a gentle vibrating movement as if floating in the air. After being thus suspended for a few moments the table was gently set down again to the floor.”

We shall soon see similar events happening in different parts of Europe, and in particular in the sittings of Eusapia Paladino, the Neapolitan medium. They could be explained by the action of fluidic forces emanating from the sitters, although it seems unlikely that external forces alone would be sufficient to move such heavy objects. But here are other facts denoting the intervention of invisible intelligent beings.

It is still Mr. Tallmadge who is speaking:

“The following phenomena occurred at my next sitting with the Misses Fox, there being then present General Hamilton, General Waddy Thompson, of South Carolina, and myself. We were directed to place the Bible, closed, on a drawer under the table. It was a small pocket Bible in very fine print.”

“For some time numerous raps were heard beating time to a march that had been suggested. These raps died away like receding feet, until the sound entirely ceased, when other loud raps gave the signal for the alphabet, by which was spelled out the single word, ‘Look.’ I took up the book most carefully, finding it was open, and desirous to preserve the place. It was then spelled out, ‘Read’; and the verses of the open chapter which it was desired I should read were also spelled out. During the reading loud and vehement rappings seemed to indorse the sentiments rehearsed with a power that was fearfully startling, as coming from an invisible source.”

“The book was open at St. John’s Gospel, third chapter, and the verses indicated to be read were the 8, 11, 19, 34, and were as follows:”

“‘8. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit’”

“‘11. Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak what we know and testify what we have seen, and ye receive not our testimony.’”

“‘19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil’”

“‘34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God ; for God giveth not the spirit by measure.’”

“After this I was directed to place several sheets of letter-paper, together with a pencil, on the drawer beneath the table. We soon heard the sound of the pencil on the paper ... I was then directed to look *under* the drawer. I found my pencil outside the drawer, and all the sheets I had placed on the top now underneath it; they were disarranged, and on the outside sheet was written, ‘I’m with you still. [John C. Calhoun]’”

“I have shown that sentence to General Hamilton, former Governor of South Carolina, General Waddy Thompson, late Mexican Minister; General Robert Campbell, of Havana, together with many other intimate friends of Mr. Calhoun. I also showed it to one of his sons, and he, as well as the rest, pronounced it to be a *perfect facsimile of the handwriting of John C. Calhoun*. General Hamilton and Mrs. General Macomb – both of whom are in possession of many private letters from Calhoun – state as a fact of peculiar significance, that he was constantly in the habit of abbreviating ‘I am’ into ‘I’m,’ hence this sentence, short as it is – I’m with you still – is peculiarly characteristic of his expression no less than his singularly terse style.

Another phenomenon of the same order is the one witnessed by ex-Congressman Charles Cathcart, a person of great learning and high social standing in Indiana:[159]

“By persevering with their circles,however, they soon recognized the welcome presence and manifestations of the now-beloved spirits, and then they discovered that their most powerful medium was Mr. Cathcart’s little son Henry, a child scarcely seven years old. No sooner did the family become harmonized to the new mediumistic power than it was displayed in the most wonderful demonstrations they had ever witnessed. Little Henry was tossed about the room like a feather. Lifted in the arms of the spirits, he would be

carried to the ceiling, cornices, windows, perched up on the highest nooks in the rooms, or carried anywhere and everywhere beyond the reach of human arms to place him ...”

“Sometimes the child would be entranced, and in that condition speak words of wonderful wisdom and beauty; but confident as the family had now become of the tender care and perfectly beneficent character of their spirit friends, the anxious mother could not bear to see her little one under this abnormal influence, and besought the spirits to abstain from entrancing him. They repeatedly assured her through the trumpet, that this influence would be beneficial to the child, and enabled them to perform much stronger feats than they could otherwise effect; but as Mrs. Cathcart could not be reconciled to this phase of the power, the spirits kindly abstained from entrancement.”

Judge Edmonds, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York, in his “Appeal to the Public,” in which he refuted the malicious accusations he had been subjected to as a result of his Spiritualist researches, summed up the problem of phenomena and their cause as follows:[160]

“I have known a pine table with four legs lifted bodily up from the floor in the center of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat, I have known that same table to be lifted up on two legs, its top at an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present put it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a center leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place though its glass pendants rang again ...”

“I have frequently known persons pulled about with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once, when all my own strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected.”

“This is not a tithe – nay, not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me.”

“While these things were going on there appeared in the newspapers various explanations and ‘exposures of the humbug,’ as they were termed. I read them with care, in the expectation of being assisted in my researches,

and I could not but smile at once at the rashness and the futility of the explanations. For instance, while certain learned professors in Buffalo were congratulating themselves on having detected it in the toe and knee joints, the manifestations in this city changed to ringing a bell placed under the table ...”

“I have heard the mediums use Greek, Latin, Spanish, and French words, when I knew they had no knowledge of any language but their own ; and it is a fact that can be attested to by many, that often there has been speaking and writing in foreign languages and unknown tongues by those who were unacquainted with either.”

“Still the question occurred, May not all this have been, by some mysterious operation, the mere reflex of the mind of some one present? The answer was that facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterwards found to be true ...” The author cites several cases, then adds: “So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind, and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others so as fully to establish the fact that it was not out minds that gave birth to or effected the communication ... But all this, and much, very much more of a cognate nature, went on to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon – an intelligence outside of, and beyond, mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of, that could at all explain that, whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who will take the trouble to inquire.”

“I found there were very many ways in which this unseen intelligence communed with us, besides the rappings and table tippings, and that through those other modes there came very many communications distinguished for their eloquence, their high order of intellect, and their pure and lofty moral tone. At the same time I discovered many inconsistencies and contradictions that were calculated to mislead.”

Haunted houses[161] are among the most frequent and widely known phenomena. They are found everywhere. There are many haunted places, houses where raps and vibrations sound all over the walls, floors and furniture. In some places, objects move without contact; stones are thrown

from without by an unknown force; one can hear dishes being smashed, screams and yells, and various other noises which inconvenience and terrify impressionable people.

I have visited some of these dwellings, where I spent long stays, having nearly always detected the presence of invisible beings that it was possible to make contact with, either through the table method or mediumistic writing. In such cases I was led to acknowledge that the agents of the manifestations were the souls of persons who had inhabited those places; souls in pain which sought to attract attention. More often than not, supportive thoughts and prayers would be enough to satisfy them. Some spirits are drawn into these dwellings by the memory of distant misdeeds; others by a desire for vengeance, or by their attachment to earthly goods.

Police searches hardly ever reveal any perpetrators. Even in the case of falling stones, one notices that the projectiles are thrown by invisible intelligences.

In the case of the Gröben parish (Germany), described by Pastor Hennisch, [162] and in that of the Münchhof farm, which was the subject of an inquiry led by Prof. J. von Arschauer, one could see stones tracing an arc of a circle, then an angle. At Münchhof, more than sixty people saw stones coming out through a window, then coming back inside tracing a curve. These projectiles never hit anyone. When reaching the witnesses to these scenes, they slid down their bodies without striking them. Objects were taken away in a failed attempt to shelter them from these phenomena which persecuted Prof. Arschauer's relatives for six months. In vain they inquired knowledgeable persons of their acquaintance – some of whom had great erudition – as to the cause of all this:

"All their scientific theories," he recounts, "collapsed under the weight of evidence. You must have experienced it yourself; it is necessary to have seen and heard it, to have spent sleepless nights, to have experienced moral and physical torments until total exhaustion, to finally arrive at the unshakable conviction that there are things scientists do not even suspect."

Elsewhere, rappings occurred day and night. The objects, carefully enclosed in cupboards and chests, were scattered throughout the rooms. The hidden intelligence revealed itself by accompanying songs, words, and even thoughts with rhythmic raps. Conversations by means of rapping and scratching were made between Mr. Akutin,[163] a civil engineer employed on

government work in Orenburg (Russia), and the invisible agents, on matters beyond the knowledge of the inhabitants of the farm. Luminous globes came from beneath the beds and corners of the rooms, and proceeded into the void. A child's hand appeared. More seriously, spontaneous fire started to erupt in several places and even in the clothes of the owner's wife, who was almost burnt. It was necessary to leave the house in haste, which had become dangerous to live in.

Allan Kardec, in *The Spiritist Review*,[164] calls attention to other haunting phenomena, such as the case of the rapping spirit of Bergzabern, whose pranks lasted eight years (issues of May, June, and July 1858); that of a baker from Grandes-Ventes, near Dieppe (March 1860); and the one that took place on Noyers Street, in Paris (August 1860). Then, in an article entitled "Story of a Naughty Spirit," we have the rapping spirit of Castelnaudary (February 1860); and later a manufacturer from St. Petersburg (April 1860), among others.

Citing the *Daily Express* of August 24, 1903, the *Journal of The Society For Psychical Research* (vol. XI, 1903–1904, p. 171 *et seq.*) reports the curious events that took place on Raikes Farm, then inhabited by the Webster family, in Beverley (UK):

"Morning after morning they came down to find the loaves they left in the bread-pan, some diminished in size, others with crusts taken off, some more with holes through them, and yet no signs of crumbs or of mice or of human handling ..."

"I, Richard Berridge, ex-Police-constable, residing at Bishop Burton, do hereby state that on August 11, 1903, I was employed by Mr. Webster, of Raikes Farm, to take charge of the dairy, with a view of trying to find out who it was that was wasting bread, as the waste has been going on since the first week in March. On the 11th inst.[165] I went to Raikes Farm, taking with me two loaves of bread which I bought at Beverley the previous night. I placed them in the dairy, and they appeared to keep all right, but I may say there was some bread in another part of the house which was wasting away. On the 13th inst. I cut the top off one of the loaves which I had taken up with me, and to my surprise there was a hole through the center of the loaf to the bottom, and the hole got larger and larger."

Mr. Webster himself, thinking at first that it was a bad joke, locked up fresh bread in the pantry, sprinkled the dry parquet floor with flour, locked

the door and, on top of that, sealed it with two strips of percale. The next day everything was intact, except for the two enclosed loaves, one of which had disappeared and the other reduced to half. The situation was becoming more and more disturbing despite all kinds of surveillance; it also resulted in a fairly substantial financial loss. So Mr. Webster decided to relocate.

Other phenomena also occurred on this farm. After dark, strange footsteps on the staircase, moving chairs and andirons, were heard and the inhabitants were awakened. The farmer and the constable made many rounds and discovered nothing. One night Mrs. Webster and her son, aged fourteen, were awakened by very gentle music. It sounded like a "chorus," said Mrs. Webster the next day.

The Annals of Psychical Science published in its April–June 1909 issue (pp. 187–188) a memorandum drawn up by an eminent Italian lawyer from Naples, Mr. Francisco Zingaropoli, on behalf of the Duchess of Castelpoto against the Baroness Laura Englen, concerning the tenant's right to terminate the lease when a house turns out to be haunted by spirits. Here are the facts that gave rise to this legal process:

"In a house owned by the Baroness Laura Englen at 7, Largo S. Carlo, Naples, occupied by the Duchess of Castelpoto and her family, there occurred strange periodical manifestations, which increased and afterwards decreased in intensity. At first there were raps and strange noises, which grew louder in the evening and at night. Next came displacements of furniture, sometimes making such a noise as to attract the attention of the tenants on the floors beneath. On one occasion steps were heard, and there was seen at the door of the room a phantasm which threw a key. The tenants left the house at night, and on returning found the doors completely blocked up with furniture. In consequence of this they demanded and obtained by legal process the canceling of the lease. (F. Zingaropoli, *Una casa infestata dagli spiriti*, Naples, 1907.)"

In his memoirs Mr. Zingaropoli cites another case of haunting, whose account was published by the engineer Professor Enrico Passaro:[166]

"Towards the end of December, 1867, at Via Ghibellina 14, Florence, there began to be heard underground noises and sudden blows on the table around which the family was assembled; household goods came tumbling out of the cupboards; stones fell; an invisible hand grasped the arms of the inmates, some of whom saw phantasms wearing large hats like those of the

Brothers of Mercy. The tenant brought a suit against the landlord for compensation for damages, and the Court accepted the plaint on the facts being proved."

Finally, also in *The Annals of Psychical Science* issue of April–June 1909 (pp. 189–192), Prof. Cesare Lombroso wrote the following especially for its readers:

"On November 16th, in a small inn kept by a man named Fumero, at 6, Via Bava, Turin, there began to be heard by day, and more especially at night, a series of strange noises. On investigating the cause it was found that bottles, empty and full, were broken in the cellar, after being thrown to the ground from the shelves; often they came down to the floor and rolled against the , closed door, so as to make it difficult to open. In the bedroom on the upper floor, which communicated by a staircase with the entrance to the parlor of the tavern, clothes were crumpled up, and some of them came down the staircase into the room beneath; two chairs were broken by falling; copper objects hung on the wall fell to the ground and slid a long way across the floor ; sometimes they were broken. A bystander placed his hat on the bed in the upper room; it disappeared, and was found in the dirt in the yard beneath."

"A crowd gathered, and the police, taking notice of the matter, gave Fumero to understand that they suspected him of trickery, so the poor fellow resolved to suffer in silence, and even gave out that everything had ceased after an imaginary visit from myself, so as to hush the matter up. I studied the case with great attention."

"I examined the place minutely. The rooms were small, with a staircase leading to a bedroom above, and there was a deep cellar beneath, reached by a long staircase and passage. I was warned that it had been noticed that as soon as anyone entered the cellar the bottles broke. I entered first in the dark, and heard glass breaking and bottles rolling about my feet; then I lighted up the place. The bottles were ranged on five shelves, one above another; in the middle was a rough table, on which I had six lighted candles placed, supposing that the spiritistic phenomena would cease in the full light. Instead of this I saw at once three empty bottles, which were standing on the floor, roll as though pushed by a hand, and break near my table. To prevent any possible fraud I examined minutely with a candle, and felt all the full bottles which stood on the shelves, to assure myself that there were neither wires nor

cords which might explain their movements."

"In May, 1903,[167] I had the opportunity of personally examining into phenomena which took place in another house in Turin, that of the compositor, Mignotti, 30, Via Massena. I was accompanied by Dr. Henry Imoda, who afterwards drew up a short report on the facts ... Every evening for three months past, when one of the children, aged 8, went to bed, they began to hear very strong blows in the wall against which the bed was placed ... When a verbal question was addressed to the unknown cause of the noises, it replied by blows according to a conventional code ; it was possible, in this manner, to carry on a conversation by having the letters of the alphabet denoted by the blows."

Since then, identical manifestations have occurred nearly everywhere. No sooner do these phenomena cease in one place than they reappear elsewhere. Does it not seem likely that this succession of repeated and intentional events occurs in order to attract and hold attention, thereby calling for research and investigation? Individuals of superficial judgment consider these manifestations as vulgar, grotesque, or unworthy of their interest. In reality, they are perfectly adapted to the positivist and materialist demands of our time. It took noisy and repeated phenomena to shake off the indifference and inertia of our contemporaries.

Such indifference is very hard to overcome. Above all, French scholars and scientists have systematically shirked and disdained the study of these phenomena. In vain are cases renewed and prolonged. In certain quarters, as in Valence-en-Brie, at the gates of Paris, manifestations lasted for months without any official scientist even bothering to lend them some attention. This does not seem to prevent these gentlemen from occasionally making statements on the subject of Spiritism, like a renowned chemist did recently, saying that they "have seen nothing and thus are forced to deny it."[168]

An exception must be made for Mr. Maxwell, MD, now Advocate General of the Court of Appeal for the Seine. In its July 1905 issue (p. 21), the *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme* published a summary of a conference on the phenomena of haunting given by him in Bordeaux (France) on June 19 of the same year.

To his knowledge, in sixteen cases of haunting, the police searched for the perpetrator (stone throwing, displacement of objects, etc.), and only twice could find culprit. He said, "I knew one of these cases closely. I have

voluntarily made an investigation into a house called *La Constantinie,* in the village of Objat (Corrèze).”

In the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research,* Mr. Maxwell reported 235 cases of haunted houses where manifestations had been visible to all. In addition, he found several cases in the archives of the ancient Parliament of Guyenne, in the form of processes of tenancy termination dating back to the eighteenth century.

Regarding haunted houses, I will now offer my personal testimony in addition to those already mentioned.

While in Tours (France), I had long lived in a house where you could hear footsteps, and raps on the walls and furniture. Doors were opened after an invisible hand had unlocked and turned the doorknob. The bell rang without being touched. Sometimes, at the very moment when a visitor was going to touch it, it was heard to ring by itself.

During the war of 1870, as an officer with the troops mobilized in the Indre-et-Loire, I was lodged for a few days in a vast and ancient dwelling on the outskirts of the camp of Dompierre, where our battalion was stationed. When, in the evening, I returned to my room through the staircases and the long corridors, I felt singular sensations, breaths, indefinable contacts which impressed me. All night long, I was bothered by mysterious noises, by vibrations which made the bed and the floor tremble.

A sergeant of my company was a medium, so I took him to this house on a winter night, and we both sat at a table, with the intent of solving the mystery behind these manifestations. The table was soon agitated and then overthrown by an irresistible force. Pencils were broken; the sheets of paper, torn. Raps shook the walls; deafening sounds seeming to come from beneath the ground were heard. Suddenly the light went out. A rumbling, stronger than all the preceding noises, made the house tremble, then faded away in the distance, in the silence of night. Before leaving this haunted house, we learned that it had formerly been the scene of bloody episodes.

Errant, lost souls also frequent the palaces. The Duchess of Pomar, whose death is always lamented by her friends for her wit and charm, her high aspirations and the grace of her regal hospitality, owned a sumptuous hotel on Wagram Avenue, open to all those in Paris who had made a name for

themselves in the field of psychical research. Therein, a sort of oratory had been arranged in the shape of a chapel. In a hazy light tinted by painted stained-glass windows, steeped in contemplation induced by the grave sounds of a harmonium, and surrounded by several mediums, she often received instructions from the unseen intelligences and especially from the spirit of Mary Stuart, which she considered a constant source of inspiration.

One evening, during a seance, the walls of the oratory vibrated under violent fluidic currents; raps reverberated on the full-length portrait of Mary Stuart, placed in a sort of sanctuary. A bronze statuette was shaken; the table around which we were seated began to oscillate and to groan. I said groan because indeed the wailing seemed to come right out of the little piece of furniture. Then General de B— interrogated it, and by means of raps cut with wails akin to sobbing, a spirit, saying that it had been General Boulanger, who had recently committed suicide at Ixelles, revealed its anguish and moral suffering. Notwithstanding the bonds of friendship that united the two generals, we could obtain nothing which would firmly establish the identity of the communicating spirit; but the groaning we heard, impossible to replicate, left a painful impression on us.

XVII

Physical phenomena, The tables

Physical phenomena occur in the most varied forms. The force that serves to produce them lends itself to all sorts of combinations. It can penetrate all bodies, go through any obstacles, cross all distances. Under the action of a powerful will, it can decompose and recompose solid matter. This is demonstrated by the phenomena of apportation or teleportation of flowers, fruits and other objects through walls, in closed rooms.[169] The German astrophysicist J. K. F. Zöllner, observed the phenomenon of matter going through matter, without the possibility of distinguishing any solution of continuity between one object and another.[170]

Using the psychical force, spirit entities acting in these manifestations manage to imitate the strangest noises.

W. Crookes, in his already cited book, gives an account of such phenomena:[171]

"The popular name of "raps" conveys a very erroneous impression of this class of phenomena. At different times, during my experiments, I have heard delicate ticks, as with the point of a pin; a cascade of sharp sounds as from an induction coil in full work; detonations in the air; sharp metallic taps; a cracking like that heard when a frictional machine is at work; sounds like scratching; the twittering as of a bird, etc."

The famous chemist and physicist considers that these raps, which he claims to have felt on his own shoulder and under his own hands, should in most cases be ascribed to invisible intelligences, since by means of agreed signals one can converse with these beings for hours on end (*op. cit.*, p. 87).

In the presence of the medium Daniel Dunglas Home, an accordion, enclosed in a cage or suspended in the air, played sweet melodies by itself.[172] The weight of the body increased or decreased at will. A table became alternately heavy, unable to be lifted, or so light that it was lifted at the slightest effort.

Mr. Home was received by several sovereigns. An unusual manifestation was obtained by Russian Emperor Alexander II, in his presence:

“During a *séance* and in full light, a spirit-hand opened a locket contrived in one of the buttons of the uniform that the Emperor wore, and containing the portrait of the defunct heir to the throne. This manifestation was followed by tiny raps struck on the button itself, that spelt out a communication confirming his Majesty’s belief as to their author.”[173]

In a memorable seance on December 16, 1868, at Ashley House in London, and attended by Lord Lindsay, Lord Adare and his cousin Captain Wynne, Mr. Home levitated and was taken outside through a window, then hovered above the street floor, and reentered through another window.

Lord Lindsay was called to testify before the Dialectical Society, where he reported the following:[174]

“We saw Home floating in the air outside our window ... I saw the shadow on the wall of the window-sill, and Home’s feet about six inches above it. He remained in this position for a few seconds, then raised the window and glided into the room feet foremost, and sat down ... The distance between the windows was about seven feet six inches.”

These phenomena took place in houses where Home had never set foot before, and where he would not have been able to make any preparations, let alone resort to any special gadgets.

In Paris, on May 27, 1886, Dr. Paul Gibier, an assistant professor at the Museum of Natural History, witnessed a case of levitation of a table rising in the air, turning and touching a ceiling four feet high, “in less time than it takes to say it.”[175]

For the purpose of psychical experimentation, we have seen, since then, prominent scholars and scientists, such as C. Richet, C. Lombroso, A. de Rochas d’Aiglun, C. Flammarion, and others, lay hands on these much ridiculed tables, in the company of Eusapia Paladino, the Neapolitan medium, to investigate the phenomenon. Many photographs taken during these sittings show the table completely detached from the floor, while the medium has her hands and feet held by the operators.

These seances began in Naples in 1891, in response to a challenge made by Mr. Chiaia to Prof. Lombroso.[176] They were repeated in Milan, in 1892; then in Naples, in 1893; in Rome and Warsaw in 1894; in 1895, at Mr. C. Richet’s, in a castle at Carqueiranne and on the Isle Roubaud, on the coast of Provence (France). Then in 1896, at Agnélas, in the residence of Colonel de Rochas d’Aiglun; in 1897, at Montfort-l’Amaury, in the presence of Mr.

Flammarion; and in 1901, at Auteuil, where the usual experimenters were joined by Mr. Sully-Prudhomme.[177]

Other sittings were held at the Minerva Club, in Genoa, in 1901, which had a great impact in Italy.

Mr. Luigi Arnaldo Vassallo, director of the newspaper *Il Secolo XIX*, collected in one volume[178] all reports of these seances, which he observed with scrupulous attention. On April 5, 1902, he gave a talk about the same subject, entitled "Mediumship and the Theory of Spiritism," at the headquarters of the Italian Press Association in Rome, during a conference chaired by the ex-Minister Luzzatti, then president of the association, which was reported by all Italian newspapers with praise. An abridged summary is presented below:

FIRST SEANCE. In full light, a four-footed, thirteen-foot-long, fir-tree table rose above the ground a great number of times, and remained hovering four inches above the floor, without being touched by human hand. Meanwhile, Eusapia's hands were being secured by the persons sitting next to her, who also restrained her feet and legs, so that no part of her body could exert the slightest effort.

SECOND SEANCE. Violent raps thundered on the table, strong enough to rupture it. Hands appeared, touching and caressing those present; strong and wide hands of men, smaller hands of women, tiny little hands of babies. Invisible lips touched the foreheads of the sitters, and kisses were heard. Casting molds of invisible hands were obtained in plastilina.[179]

FIFTH SEANCE. The medium, whose hands were being held secured all the time, levitated with her chair, raised by a hidden force, smoothly, slowly and without jerking; and remained hovering in the air, with her two feet and the front feet of the chair resting on the surface of the table, which had already been damaged by the raps. The weight thus lifted was about 155 pounds, which required considerable strength.

More extraordinary still was the fact that, from the surface of the table, Eusapia, would further levitate on her chair, to the point of allowing Prof. Francesco Porro, the astronomer, and another person, to pass their hands under her feet and those of the chair, without having planned it beforehand – and the impressions they both had were perfectly consistent.

Her detaching herself with her chair from the table, indicates even more than her detaching from the floor, the intervention of a force extrinsic to the

medium, at one time intelligent and foreseeing, which succeeded in producing actions with results that avoided any mishaps, which were always possible to occur, given the weight of Eusapia, the precarious support offered by a half-broken table, and the fact that the two rear feet of her chair were suspended in the air.

SIXTH SEANCE. Displacements of objects without contact: flowers, jewel rings, musical instruments, slates, a compass and above all one of these dynamometers used to measure the strength with which a hand is capable to tighten a spring. Four or five times, as if in a game, this dynamometer was removed from its owner, who had reset it, and then rendered each time with indications ranging from a maximum reading corresponding to a herculean strength down to a minimum one similar to the strength of a small child.

"How could anyone attribute," said Prof. Porro, "to a state of disengagement from her body, such complicated process of intentional and conscious actions, accompanied by such a wise gradation of dynamic effects? How could Eusapia possibly simulate alternately various spirit entities, and develop in each, every time, their own corresponding strengths?"

Materializations took place during subsequent sittings, of which I will speak later in a special chapter devoted to this type of manifestation.

Elsewhere, Dr. Ochorowicz, in Warsaw (Poland), obtained in broad daylight and often at will, with the assistance of the medium Ms. Tomczyck, displacements of objects without contact: pencils, needles, test tubes, and so on. He was able to photograph them hovering in the air.[180]

It is by mistake that the phenomenon of levitation has been interpreted as a violation of the law of gravity. It simply demonstrates the action of an invisible force and intelligence. Mediums would not be able to find in themselves the force or strength to rise up in the air without any support, and to remain hovering. It is necessary to admit the intervention of an external agent, which builds up fluidic force in sufficient amounts to counterbalance the weight of the medium or that of levitated objects, and detach them from the ground. These fluids are borrowed in part from the medium, who in this case plays the role of a battery, then from other persons present, and if it proves insufficient, from other invisible spirit entities which are lending assistance to the operator.

It is the same when it comes to raps or knocks. These noises are produced by the condensation and projection of fluid clusters on hard bodies. These

clusters can sometimes be luminous. We read the following account in Mr. Livermore's notes:[181]

"Then the mode of producing raps was shown: an orange-shaped luminous ball, with blunt point attached, bounding up and down on the table, and the sound of each rap coinciding with the approach of the ball to the table top."

It is clear to see that all these phenomena are related to known physical laws. One needs only to extend the application of these laws to the unseen world just as they are applied to the visible world. From then on everything is cleared up and becomes explainable. There is nothing supernatural about all this. Spiritism is a science that teaches us to know the nature and action of hidden forces, in the same way that mechanics lets us know the laws of motion, and optics, the laws of light. Its phenomena should be added to known physical phenomena, without altering or destroying the instituted order which governs them all. It has simply broadened its scope, while at the same time making us penetrate to the ultimate depths of nature and life.

Not only do the tables play an important role in spontaneous physical manifestations, but they also have a part in intellectual phenomena.

Turning and talking tables have given rise to much criticism and mockery; but as Victor Hugo said: "This raillery is out of place."[182] If, leaving aside the sterile and idle jeering, we simply consider the phenomenon itself, what will we see in these manifestations of tables? Nearly always, a manner of action of a conscious, intelligent being.

The table is one of the easiest pieces of furniture to move. It is found everywhere, in all quarters. This is why it is more preferably used. Above all, it is the results obtained that should be considered, and not the object that served to produce the phenomena. When we read a beautiful page or look at a painting, do we think of the pen that wrote it or the brush that was used to paint it? The table does not matter; it is but an ordinary instrument for transmitting the spirits' thoughts. Depending on the nature of the communicating spirit, these thoughts may be alternately banal, coarse, witty, malicious, poetic or sublime. Researchers, who by this means receive demonstrations of affection from those whom they have loved, will easily forget the insignificance of the process employed.

It is true that certain table movements can be attributed to the action of forces exteriorized by the sitters and transmitted through their hands to the furniture. In such experiments, one should always take into account involuntary movements made by the operators, and whether a phenomenon is physical, a suggestion, or a genuine manifestation of an intelligence.

However, in most cases, those two causes are insufficient to explain the phenomena. First of all, the contact of hands is not always necessary to cause the table to move. To solve this problem, Faraday, Babinet, Chevreul and other scientists had once adopted the theory of unconscious muscular movements. But now the tables moved independently of all human contact. This was established by the experiments of Robert Hare and W. Crookes, who monitored furniture movements by means of measuring and recording equipment used in physics laboratories.

In 1869, a report of the Investigation Committee appointed by the Dialectical Society of London[183] confirmed their deductions. Here is part of what the report concluded:[184]

1. A force emanating from the operators can act without contact, or any possibility of contact, upon material objects.
2. Such force is often intelligently directed.

Among the most famous examples are the experiments carried out for several years at 2 Beaune Street, in Paris, by the witty writer Eugène Nus, joined by the painter Charles Brunier, the composer Allyre Bureau and the engineer Louis Franchot, which will be briefly recalled below.[185]

To begin with, there was this heavy, massive dining table, which rose two feet off the ground and remained motionless in perfect balance. Weighing it down vigorously could hardly bring it back to its normal position.

Then they experimented with a round pedestal table, which, being lighter, bounced, rose under their hands, and imitated the swinging movements of a cradle and the rolling of sea waves. “Because this table becomes intelligent ... It needs no words, no gestures or signs to understand us. It suffices for us to mentally make a wish and, as promptly as thought, it comes and goes, halts, stands on its two feet and obeys.”

It “speaks” by means of raps, dictating sentences, teachings, delicate or profound sentences. For example: “*Solitary experimentation is a source of errors, hallucinations and follies. To make useful experiments, one must be*

preoccupied with God. Raise your souls to God so as to be invigorated against the downfalls of doubt."

When asked to speak English, it did it in a very poetic way. Several expressions unknown to the French sitters could only be translated by looking them up in a dictionary.

Then there were the definitions given in twelve words. Eugène Nus said: "I challenge all literary and scholarly academies together to formulate abruptly, instantly, without preparation, and without reflection, definitions limited to twelve words, as clear, as complete, and often as elegant as those made impromptu by our table."

Here are some of them:

"HARMONY: *The perfect balance of the whole and of its parts among themselves.*"

"LOVE: *Pivot of mortal passion; attraction of the senses; the element of continuity.*"

"FUTURE RELIGION: *Progressive ideals as dogma, the arts as worship, nature as church.*"

"Sometimes ... we refused to accept a definition that did not seem sufficiently clear, or sufficiently written, to us. Then it started all over again immediately, and dictated a brand-new, twelve-word definition."

"At times we would interrupt the phenomenon, to search for the end of a sentence ourselves, and could never find it. For example, once the table gave us the definition of FAITH: *Faith deifies what sentiment reveals, and ...* – And what? I asked suddenly, while pressing my hand on the table to prevent it from completing its dictation. Still barely a few words missing, so let's guess them! We looked at each other, thought hard and then stood befuddled. Finally, we restored freedom of movement to the table, which finished its sentence with ease: *and reason explains.*"

"No matter how much we tried to confine ourselves to the role of experimenters, it was impossible for us to remain indifferent to the statements made by this mysterious interlocutor that posed and imposed its strange personality with such sharpness and independence, also being superior to all of us, at least as far as expression and condensation of ideas are concerned; and at times opening up insights which none of us, in good faith, could ever have consciously inferred."

That same table also composed melodies. French composer Félicien David

was delighted when he heard them performed. There were, among others, The Song of the Earth in Space, The Song of the Sea, The Melody of the Wind, The Song of the Lunar Satellite, Songs of Saturn, Jupiter and Vesta, The Worshiping Song, etc.[186]

By now, messages were dictated by raps struck on the table itself, not on the floor with its feet. Then it was the pencil of C. Brunier, who had since become a writing medium, that interpreted the thoughts of the invisible visitor. To a question posed by Eugène Nus – "What is duty?" – the pencil replied: "*Duty is the freely willed fulfillment of an intelligent being's destiny. Duty will be proportional to the being's degree in the great, necessary, divine hierarchy. I use the term necessary, because necessity always implies God.*"

"Let us close with this comparison which gives us a true idea of the meaning prayer: *Assume that a being is represented as a circle. This being has an internal life and an external life. This external or radiant life, or divine expansion, starts from a point which lies in the center and goes beyond the circle corresponding to the finite, in order to reach the infinite. It is therefore the elevation in life. In modern religion, from the point of view of simple prayer, this is called 'elevation to God.' Probe these three words, and you will be able to conclude using science.*"

Eugène Nus's mysterious interlocutor did not make itself known.[187] However, in other cases, invisible personalities absolutely unknown to the experimenters have introduced themselves by means of the table, and their identities have been accurately established.

This was the case, among others, of Anastasia Perelygin, who died in November 1887 in Tambov (Russia), and on the day after her death in Mr Nartzeff's home, spontaneously manifested herself through the table to a group of people, none of whom knew of her existence.[188]

Then there was the case of American soldier Abraham Florentine who died on August 5, 1874 in Brooklyn (USA), and gave a communication in Shanklin, Isle of Wight (UK), that same month, providing in a very clear way his age, address, and many details about his past life. Thorough investigation subsequently proved all the details to be accurate.[189]

There are numerous proofs of identity obtained by means of the table, but many have been missed by the press and science, owing to the intimate character of these manifestations. Many sensible souls dread the idea of exposing the secret of their attachments and sorrows to public scrutiny.

Dr. Chazarain presented two communications of this kind at the Paris Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress of 1900, as follows:[190]

“For ten years, in a familial mediumistic group that I directed, and whose medium was only thirteen years old when our seances began, we communicated in a most felicitous way with our friends from beyond, which provided us with teachings about life on the spiritual plane, of a quality rarely found in communications obtained by means of the table.”

“To me, the first seemed to respond to the acute sorrow I suffered for the death of my two best friends, who had died a few days apart, two and a half months before.” Here is the first communication:

“(Communication of May 16, 1888.) ... Would you like to hear the joyous concert that takes place up there, when a dear and expected soul makes its re-entry into the spirit world? Would you like to contemplate the joy of welcoming it back again?”

“Oh, we who have experienced these joys would like to be able to share them with you, but, alas, why should our happiness be so often disturbed by your sorrows? ... When one of you is ripe for returning to the land of souls, it is necessary for you to rise above all earthly sufferings and break all the ties which bind you to Earth. Nothing can restrain you or chain you any longer. Like a prisoner to whom freedom is restored, your soul flies to the new horizons open to it. Oh, do not weep too much for your dearest beloved that flew away, for, after having known the bitterness of separation, you will also come to know the sweetness of reunion.”

Tables have been consulted by people of high intellect and culture. Thanks to them, Mme. de Girardin (Delphine de Girardin, 1804–1855) conversed with distinguished spirits. In *Les Miettes de l’Histoire* (Paris, Pagnerre, 1863), French journalist and writer Auguste Vacquerie tells us that, on the island of Jersey (between the UK and France, near Guernsey), she had initiated Victor Hugo’s family into these practices. This moving account is borrowed from his book:

One evening, “The table answered with the name of a dead woman thought to be still alive by all those who were there, but it caused no distrust: no one would have had the heart or be so daring as to trample over someone’s tomb in our presence. It would already have been very hard to admit that we were made the victims of a mystification, let alone an infamy! The suspicion itself would have been greeted with contempt. Then the brother questioned

the sister who had come out from the dead to comfort the exiled. The mother wept, an inexpressible emotion tightened everyone's chests; and I could distinctly feel the presence of the one who the wind storm had snatched. Where was she now? Did she still love us? Was she happy? She answered all the questions, or replied that she was forbidden to answer some of them. Meanwhile, we remained there, our souls transfixed by the invisible apparition, until the spirit finally said, 'Farewell,' and the table stopped moving."

After Mme. de Girardin went back to France, the great exile[191] continued these mysterious conversations, and consigned them to a few notebooks, which Mr. Camille Flammarion was able to examine, and then publish fragments in *Les Annales Politiques et Littéraires* of May 7, 1899. Here they are some of them:[192]

"Mme. Victor Hugo and her son François were almost always at the table. Vacquerie and a few others approached it only alternately. Hugo never did. From the sidelines, he played instead the role of secretary, by noting down the dictations of the table on sheets of paper ... In general, when consulted in these conditions, the table would immediately announce the presence of poets, such as Molière, Shakespeare, Camões; dramatic authors and other illustrious personages, such as Galileo, Alexander the Great, and others. But most of the time, when these spirits were consulted and questioned individually, in place of the name that was expected, the stable would spell out by raps that of an imaginary being, such as 'The Idea' or 'The Shadow of the Sepulcher' ..."

"Now, one day, the spirits – which often replied in verse to the questions made to them – demanded that they should also be questioned in verse." Victor Hugo prepared two questions and, on the following day, after the spirit of Molière answered the call, the author of *La Légende des Siècles* [*The Legend of the Ages*] read them aloud. The second question was posed as follows:

Victor Hugo to Molière

"O you, who from old Shakespeare took on the combatant's belt,
O great Molière, who next to his Othello carved your sullen Alceste!
Star that now gleams on a double horizon,

Poet in the Louvre, archangel in heaven,
Your splendid visit honors my home.
Will you extend me a welcoming hand up there,
When I lie in the grave open for me down here beneath the grass?
I shall not fear the eternal shadows of the tomb;
For I know that while the body therein finds a prison,
The soul is set free and finds wings!”

“We waited. Molière did not reply. Instead, the answer came once again from The Shadow of the Sepulcher; and no one could possibly read this reply without being struck by its ironic grandeur:”

Molière to Victor Hugo

“O you, who wish to know the secrets of darkness,
And who, holding an earthly torch in the hand,
Comes furtively, groping into our funereal shadows,
trying to unlock this immense tomb!
Go back to silence and blow out your candles!
Return into the night from which at times you emerge.
The living eye cannot read eternal things
Over the shoulders of the dead!”

“That was a hard lesson. It appears that Victor Hugo furiously threw down his notebook, stood up and left the room, highly indignant at the conduct of the spirits toward him.”

“No doubt,” concludes Mr. Flammarion, “these communications dictated by the Jersey table exhibit great elevation of thought and a beautiful command of language. The author of *Les Contemplations* has always believed that there was an external being, independent of him, sometimes even hostile and argumentative, and firmly putting him in his right place. However, when going through these three notebooks, one cannot avoid the suspicion that this was ‘Victor Hugo.’ It is Victor Hugo’s own voice that one hears, sometimes even that of a sublime Victor Hugo.”

“One cannot accuse Victor Hugo, Vacquerie, or any of the assembled group, of cheating or having consciously created sentences to be reproduced by the movements of the table. There is no quarrel in this regard. Only two

hypotheses remain: either there was an unconscious out-of-body experience of the spirits of Victor Hugo, Vacquerie, and one or more of the sitters; or else an independent spirit was really present."

I cannot share Mr. Flammarion's hesitation regarding this problem. The verses of The Shadow of the Sepulcher were evidently not the work of Victor Hugo, as he himself had declared in advance that he "did not know how to improvise in this fashion," and was irritated at the haughty and spontaneous response of the spirit. Since it is not admissible that he tried to inflict a lesson on himself, the respect with which he was surrounded makes it even less plausible that someone in his circle would have had those thoughts. Besides we are told he was never at the table. As for the language, let us not forget that spirits do not use it among themselves, but communicate through thought. They use articulate language only when addressing humans, and always in the form that is usual to us. Why should it cause wonder that a spirit of great elevation, as seems to have been the case of Victor Hugo's interlocutor, wished to speak to the poet in his own language? Any other style would have been beneath the occasion and the circumstances.

There have been numerous conversions to Spiritism on account of table phenomena. The table, which rises, bounces and tilts with or without contact, dictates unforeseen words, impressing the skeptics and confounding the unbelievers. However, convictions are fixed and secured only when these phenomena are of an intelligent character and provide evidence of identity. Without these, the first impression soon dissipates, and one might explain the fact by a purely physical cause, quite different from a spirit intervention.

Purely physical facts are powerless to promote lasting convictions. Prof. Charles Richet has recognized it himself. He witnessed very significant manifestations in Milan, Rome, and Paris, and signed conclusive minutes of the sittings; but soon afterwards, by force of habit, he fell back into his former reluctance.

In a speech given in 1899 at the Society for Psychical Research in London, [193] he declared that, "Our own conviction – the conviction of men who have seen – ought properly to convince other people; but, by a curious inversion of roles, it is their conviction, the negative conviction of people who have not

seen, and who ought not, one would think, to speak on the matter, which weakens and ultimately destroys our own conviction."

As we could see in the cases described above, the table can become an instrument for the communication of eminent spirits. These cases are nonetheless quite rare. As a rule, it is spirits of lower intelligence that manifest themselves through this process. Their communications are generally mundane or even rude and worthless. The lower the spirit, the easier it is for it to act upon material objects. Advanced spirits use the table only exceptionally, and in the absence of any other means. The contact and the manipulation of the fluids necessary for this sort of manifestations impose a certain malaise on spirits of subtle and delicate nature. Nevertheless, their affection, their solicitude for us, often makes them overcome such difficulties.

Table manifestations represent only the antechamber of Spiritism, an entrance to nobler and more instructive phenomena. You should not dwell on physical experiments, but once you have taken from them whatever you may need to strengthen your certainty, seek out more perfect modes of communication, capable of leading you to the true knowledge of the beings and their destiny.

XVIII

Direct writing or psychography,[194] mediumistic writing

Writing is also one of the means by which those we have loved on Earth can communicate with us and convey their thoughts. It is presented in two forms: direct writing or psychography, and mediumistic writing.

Of these two modes of manifestation, direct writing is certainly the safest, the easiest to control. It can occur in full light. The medium remains in its normal state, free from its actions, to the point that he or she does not seem to play any part in producing the phenomenon. Sheets of paper placed in locked boxes or drawers, or between tied and sealed double slates, are found covered in writing and signed with names of deceased persons.

In modern times, Baron Ludwig von Guldenstubbe was the first to draw public attention to this order of phenomena, with his book *Positive Pneumatologie: die Realität der Geisterwelt, sowie das Phänomen der direkten Schrift der Geister*.[195]

Without the assistance of any other person, and being doubtlessly a medium himself, he obtained numerous written messages under very varied conditions. His most remarkable experiments took place at the Louvre, the Museum at Versailles, the Cathedral of Saint Denis, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, and various churches and ancient ruins in France, Germany, Austria and England.

Among witnesses to these phenomena, he cites Mr. Delamarre, editor-in-chief of *La Patrie*; Croisselat, editor of *L'Univers*; R. Dale Owen; Lacordaire, brother of the great orator; Mr. Émile de Bonnechose, the historian; Prince Leonid Galitzin; and the Reverend William Mountford, whose testimonies on this matter were all published by the British journal *Spiritualist* of December 21, 1877.

The baron would place sheets of his own notebook in hidden places, without a pencil or anything to write. Then he would withdraw a few steps, without losing sight of the object of the experiment for a single moment, and

later remove the paper on which now there were intelligible messages.

The volume contains thirty facsimiles of psychographies thus obtained and chosen out of more than two hundred specimens in twenty different languages.

In certain cases, after sheets of paper and pencils had been placed on tables or on the floor, under the eyes of the experimenters, the pencil stood as if held by an invisible hand and traced characters. At other times, this hand is seen guiding and directing the movements of the pencil. In other cases still, the writing appears to be the result of some chemical action.

In his book *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London, 1874, p. 93), W. Crookes cites several examples of direct writing:

"I was sitting next to the medium, Miss Fox, the only other persons present being my wife and a lady relative, and I was holding the medium's two hands in one of mine, whilst her feet were resting on my feet. Paper was on the table before us, and my disengaged hand was holding a pencil."

"A luminous hand came down from the upper part of the room, and after hovering near me for a few seconds, took the pencil from my hand, rapidly wrote on a sheet of paper, threw the pencil down, and then rose up over our heads, gradually fading into darkness."

In *Animisme et Spiritisme* (Paris, 1895, pp. 112–113), Aksakof cites several instances in which the hands of materialized spirits have written before the eyes of all those present.

The following are more recent phenomena obtained in the village of Douchy (France), and presented in Paris at the Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress by Dr. Dusart, in 1900:[196]

On March 4, 1898, the medium Maria D—, surrounded by five people, showed an empty chair on which she said she could see the spirit of Agnès – her cousin, who had died several years earlier – busy writing on pieces of paper cut into the shape of a heart. A moment later, all those present could see a hand on the table and a packet containing five paper hearts, with a short prayer written on one of them. Agnès's parents, Mr. and Mrs. N—, recognized their daughter's handwriting and burst into tears.

At another seance, they all could see, twice, "A pen placed on the table stand, become wet with ink without being soaked in an inkwell, write two lines, and resume its original position."

In other cases, direct writing occurs on slates.

At this point, a commentary is needed. We know that certain radiations have a dissolving action upon fluids. A sharp light, or fixing one's gaze upon the point where the experiment will take place, can paralyze the psychical force and obstruct the manifestations, whereas conversely, ambient darkness can favor them. But the latter makes experiment control more difficult, which diminishes the value of the results obtained. It is therefore necessary to resort to darkness as little as possible, except in regard to luminous phenomena, which cannot be induced without it.

Experiments of direct writing on slates offer the invaluable advantage of being pursued in full light and subjected to strict control, besides enabling the most favorable conditions for the preparation of phenomena. Indeed, slates applied against each other constitute by their inner faces an absolutely obscure chamber, similar to the photographer's camera obscura, and, for that very reason, quite favorable to fluidic action.

In all the experiments which we are about to cite, the slates were new, clear of any writing, purchased and contributed by the experimenters themselves. Often, in order to avoid fraudulent replacements, they would bear a secret mark. They were either firmly tied together or sealed and double-sealed, and even, as in the case of Mrs. L. Andrews and Mr. W. Petty, were tightly screwed together. Under these conditions, messages appeared within these slates, which had not been lost sight of for a single moment. Sometimes even the hands of the experimenters would not let go of them. In other cases, neither the medium nor any of the sitters touched the slates. A piece of crayon left in the empty gap between the slates could be heard during the whole duration of the phenomenon, creaking on the shale and producing the characteristic noises that occur when dotting punctuation marks and crossing Ts.

In a book entitled *Psychography* (2nd ed., London, 1882), William Stainton Moses under the pseudonym of Oxon offers a highly documented treatise on the phenomena of direct writing on slates, in which he cites numerous instances observed by himself during a ten-year period. To these facts he the adds others of the same nature, as seen and attested by equally serious researchers.

Collective testimonies from considerable personages or skeptical observers are included. Among them the author often cites the names of J. L. O'Sullivan, formerly American Minister at the Court of Portugal, the Counselor Thiersch, the Professor of Criminal Law Wach; Professors Zöllner, Fechner, Weber and Scheibner, of the German universities of Göttingen and Leipzig; Harrison, Editor of *The Spiritualist*, in London; Robert Dale Owen, formerly American Minister at the Court of Naples, and others.

Since most of these phenomena have already been reported by several magazines and journals,[197] only a small number are cited below:

Sergeant Cox, then President of the Psychological Society of Great Britain, said he had received several messages on slates, via the medium Dr. Slade. The following is an excerpt of his testimony:

"Dr. Slade's hands, were on the table upon my hands, and his whole body to his feet was fully before my eyes ... Then he took the slate after I had carefully inspected it, to be assured that no writing- was upon it, and placing there a piece of slate pencil, the size of a small grain of wheat, he pressed the slate tightly below but against the slab of the table. Presently I heard the sound as of writing on a slate."

"Some rapid rappings, indicating that the writing was finished, the slate was lifted, and in a clear and perfectly distinct writing the following was read. It filled the whole side of the slate:"

"Dear Sergeant. You are now investigating a subject that is worthy of all the time you or any other man of mind can devote to its investigation. When man can believe in this truth, it will in most cases make him a better man. This is our object in coming to earth, to make man and woman better, wiser, and purer." [198]

Elsewhere, renowned preacher Reverend Minot J. Savage cites the testimony of one of his friends, a Jewish rabbi who was skeptical about the possibility of communicating with the other world:

"He went to a slate writing medium in Chicago ... He wrote a brief note to his father, who had died years before in Germany. He wrote the note in German, spelling it out with Hebrew characters. This he did to preclude the possibility of the medium's knowing what it was, even if he had some surreptitious way of reading it. He said that he then placed this note between two slates of his own, tied them together, and at the direction of the psychic

hung them on the chandelier over the table where they were sitting. After a little time he was directed to take them down and open them. On the inside he found, written on the slate, a reply to his note, signed by his father's name, and written in precisely the same way in which he had written his own – that is, in the German language, but spelled with Hebrew characters." [199]

Sometimes the characters traced on the slate are so small that they cannot be read without the aid of a strong magnifying glass. These characters differ according to the communicating spirits, and the type of each writing is maintained unaltered throughout the duration of the experiments, however long it may last. Not only do the features of the writing remain constant, but the messages also reveal the presence of a conscious individuality that declares that it has lived on the Earth in the human condition. The texts show originality, both in content and form; the intelligent entities are clearly distinguished from one another by their communications, as well as distinct from the medium.

Certain messages obtained in the presence of the mediums Slade, Monck or Watkins, were written in ancient or modern Greek, in Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Dutch, German, Arabic or Chinese. Now, all the witnesses testify that none of these mediums knew any of these languages. For this very reason it was impossible to suspect any fraud on their part.

Robert Dale Owen, experimenting with Slade, had once placed on his own knees, in full light, a slate covered with a sheet of paper. Then a fluidic hand, similar to that mentioned by W. Crookes and emerging from under the table, appeared and wrote a communication on the sheet.

"This hand resembled, point for point, that of a white marble female statue, alike in size, in color, and in form ; the fingers taper, and the whole most delicately molded. *It was detached and shaded off at the wrist. It commenced writing about the middle of the note-sheet, and continued to write under my eyes for two or three minutes* ... Then it slipped gently back under the table ... Again an interval, perhaps of five minutes. Then appeared a second hand, somewhat smaller than the first ... This hand moved to the top of the sheet of paper, wrote as the former had done ... I found the first written to be in English, a commonplace communication, with the signature of Dr. Slade's deceased wife. The last written, but first on the note-sheet ..., was in Greek."[200]

None of these phenomena can be considered as hallucinations, since each

time the writing has remained as an irrefutable proof of the action of the spirits.

The most extensive communication ever received on slates is that which Mr. J. J. Owen, editor of the American journal *Golden Gate*, obtained with the aid of the medium Fred Evans, on December 24, 1892. It stretched over fourteen double slates, all tied and sealed, which were covered in writing in a quarter of an hour, and contained a thousand words.[201]

Another journalist, editor of the British journal *Light*, obtained by the same process a message from his deceased father, in ten different colors. The slates remained closed in his hands. Throughout the experiment, he spoke to the medium and diverted his attention to a variety of subjects. Each line of communication is of a distinct color, not written or painted, but as if chemically precipitated by means which escape analysis.[202]

In France, Dr. Paul Gibier, Supernumerary to the Chair of Pathology of the Museum of Paris, also studied the phenomenon of direct writing. In 1886, in thirty-three sessions, he obtained with the assistance of the medium Slade, messages on closed double slates in various languages, several of which were unknown to the medium. Photographic reproductions of these messages can be found in Dr. Gibier's book *Le Spiritisme (Fakirisme Occidental)*.[203]

In these experiments, the medium simply laid the tips of his fingers on the slates to communicate the psychical force. Once, the slates were laid on his head, in full view of those present.

At the International Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress, in Paris in 1900, Prof. Moutonnier presented slates on which messages from his deceased daughter had been written. This manifestation had occurred in the United States, with the aid of the Bangs sisters. The professor was completely unknown in the U.S., and that was the first time the mediums met him. He did not lose sight of the slates, which had no contact with them. The writing is identical to the one Miss Moutonnier used to have while living on Earth. [204]

Direct writing phenomena, although frequent, are surpassed in number by those of mediumistic writing. The faculty of mediums writers is one of the most widespread and one that offers the most diverse aspects.

Since the process of rapped messages was regarded as too slow by some experimenters, they devised special devices, such as the dial and the planchette,[205] to facilitate spirit communication. Those were further simplified. Some persons had the idea of substituting themselves for any apparatus. Grabbing a pencil, they let their hands be guided by an external impulsion, thus receiving messages of which they were unaware of and which appeared to emanate from spirits of the deceased.

But soon they encountered many difficulties. First of all, it must be admitted that the automatism of the hand that writes is not, by itself, a spirit phenomenon. In England, the experiments of Gurney and Myers on the writing of somnambulists upon awakening; and those of Misters Pierre Janet, Ferré, Dr. Binet, and others, in France, demonstrated that automatic writing can be induced in a subject by means of suggestion while giving this phenomenon all the appearance of mediumship.

Hypnotized subjects were told by experimenters to play, on their awakening, this or that character, and write orders and messages relating to their imposed role. When the hypnotic suggestions were fulfilled down to the smallest of details, Mr. Pierre Janet, and with him other scholars and scientists, believed that they had discovered in posthypnotic action, the explanation of all the phenomena of mediumistic writing. The mediums, they claimed, are either auto-suggested, or submit to external suggestions.

Others, such as Hippolyte Taine and Prof. Flournoy, attributed the communications to the influence of the second self, that is to say, a second subconscious or “subliminal” ego, which seems to them to exist in us and which, in the case of mediumship, would substitute for the normal personality to act upon the thought and the hand of the sensitive.

To these difficulties one must add the telepathic action of the living at a distance, and thought transmission.

As we can see, the phenomenon of mediumistic writing is linked with most delicate problems of personality and consciousness, with abnormal states of the soul considered in its manifold manifestations.

We owe recognition to the scholars and scientists that have studied these complex problems. Their researches have provided us with valuable indications for eliminating certain causes of error from the field of psychical research. However, we cannot accept their skeptical conclusions, as extreme in their sectarianism as those defended by believers, who in turn are inclined

to see, in every single phenomenon, an intervention of the deceased. *In medio stat veritas* (Truth stands in the middle). When the causes of error as determined, along with the facts that are closely related to it, are all carefully removed, there still remains a great number of manifestations that are absolutely inexplicable by the theories of our skeptical opponents.

As we shall see, the latter are messages expressing ideas which are quite unforeseen, even in opposition to those of the sitters; and messages in foreign languages unknown to the mediums. In addition, communications by the illiterate or infants, as well as scientific and literary answers given to persons who are not versed in these matters, should also be pointed out. Then the handwriting styles and personal signatures of deceased persons, have been mechanically reproduced by mediums who have never met them, nor seen any writings in their hand. Not even the trivial and crude communications obtained in honest meetings can be accused of not demonstrating the intervention of an intelligence other than the medium's. For instance, one cannot ascribe to suggestion the "historical" words that backward spirits amuse themselves in dictating by means of the table or the pencil.

It should be pointed out that there is no real correlation between the automatism of hypnotized subjects and the actions of genuine writing mediums. The latter have not previously undergone any hypnotic influence. They are not immersed in sleep, and remain in full possession of their senses and free will. They can reject, if they so choose, the inspirations they receive, and refuse to cooperate; whereas hypnotized subjects, even after awakening, are still under the influence of the hypnotist, and submit to the latter's will. Hypnotized subjects cannot escape the hypnotist's action, whereas mediums will act of their own free will and voluntarily lend their brains and hands to obtain the results pursued.

Another consideration is that a hypnotized subject can only carry out a suggestion within the restricted limits of his or her normal knowledge and skills. Thus their language and writings are always despairingly banal, entirely devoid of the proofs of identity and the spontaneous revelations that make up all the value of Spiritist messages. In vain will one suggest to a poorly educated subject that he or she is a writer or poet: this person will produce nothing original, nothing remarkable. This is not the case with mediums, whose messages often exceed their intelligence and knowledge. I myself have even seen communications of great significance written by

children.

The criterion in this order of facts is as follows: Through hypnotic suggestion, the productions obtained are always on a par with the subject's normal abilities; whereas, in mediumship, they are nearly always superior to the writer's condition and knowledge. Conversely, the automatic and unconscious writing of Mr. Pierre Janet's hysterical patients were never spontaneous; they took place only after long training and special education. Moreover, they were restricted to women.

As for the theory of the subliminal, so dear to Mr. Flournoy, it is true that in the deep consciousness of each and every one of us, there are memories, impressions and knowledge arising from our former existences, and even from present life, which can be awakened under certain conditions, as we shall see in the chapter about "incorporations" (psychophonies). But such awakening is only possible in the somnambulistic state; and, as we have just seen, this state is not the same as that of writing mediums.

The unconscious or subconscious is not a being per se, but simply a state of being. It cannot produce by itself the various manifestations which we have examined: intelligent communications whether rapped or written, with or without a pencil, or by means of chemically precipitated colors, plus all the phenomena that are the object of these studies. Besides, it is inconceivable why these unconscious parts hidden in us would unanimously claim, as they do, that they are the spirits of the dead. We fail to see for what reason a medium's own spirit, temporarily freed, would compel his or her own unconscious to identify with the spirit of a different, deceased person. If there exists in us a second personality possessing skills and knowledge superior to our normal self, then it must be at least equally gifted with respect to moral dispositions, and abhor falsehood. How then can we admit that, whenever it manifests itself, it takes a malicious pleasure in deceiving others?

Neither can the theory of a conscious collective being, created by the intelligences of the persons participating in the experiments, account for the reality of the phenomena. This theory is demolished by the opposing views expressed and the cases of identity which are frequently revealed in manifestations.

W. Crookes, so cautious in all things, has pronounced on this matter in no uncertain terms:[206]

"The intelligence governing the phenomena is sometimes manifestly

below that of the medium. It is frequently in direct opposition to the wishes of the medium: when a determination has been expressed to do something which might not be considered quite right, I have known urgent messages given to induce a reconsideration. The intelligence is sometimes of such a character as to lead to the belief that it does not emanate from any person present."

All purported explanations of phenomena that excluded the intervention of spirits have proved unable to resist the power of mounting evidence, or processes of rigorous critical examination. In the end, they only succeeded in demonstrating insufficient research and observations on the part of their authors. The Spiritist theory, alone, can suit the vast majority of phenomena. It offers two indisputable advantages: one, of reporting everything using simple, clear, and easily understood principles; and another, no less significant one, of having not been conceived by voluntary experimenters, but instead, of being constantly and invariably formulated by the intelligent causes of the manifestations.

Having said that, let us turn to the phenomena.

Phenomena of mediumistic writing are as old as human history. There have been many examples since antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Withdrawn in the depths of a cavern, Muhammad had covered parchments in writing at a feverish pace, which he discarded at random. Later on, people gathered these scattered parchments, coordinated them, and what do we have? The Koran! The Christ himself inquired of the Supreme Intelligence and at times wrote the answer on the sand, as in the case of the adulterous woman. The Italian polymath Jerome Cardan (Girolamo Cardano) [207] affirmed that his works were written with the aid of a spirit.

The great majority of those who have thrown into the world the seeds of progress, justice and truth, have been intermediaries for the Hereafter, like mirrors in which the radiance of higher thought was reflected. Their number would have been greater still, if the inferiority of our condition did not make these higher manifestations difficult to accomplish in our material world. The share to be allocated to each mediumship in this field cannot be specified, since in this case intuition is closely mingled with automatism.

In modern times, the faculty of writing under the influence of some hidden impetus has been more clearly evidenced in certain individuals. The following are some of the most famous cases:

Hudson Tuttle, of Cleveland, Ohio, at the age of eighteen was a simple farm worker without any education or schooling, who was busy all day, every day, doing tough jobs on the farm. During the night, under the inspiration of the spirits, he wrote an admirable book called *Arcana of Nature* (Boston, W. White & Co, 1864) which far outstripped the scientific knowledge of the time. There were no books or libraries in his possession, for his parents lived in the woods and occupied themselves exclusively with agriculture. The work was published in the 1860s, with an appendix indicating its origin. It had three editions in the U.S., and was subsequently re-edited in England, and published in Leipzig in a German translation signed by Dr. Aschenbrenner.

Curiously, Dr. Ludwig Büchner, one of the exponents of German scientific materialism, after reading the work without paying any attention to its appendix, thought it came from a scientist and borrowed many quotations from it, which were included in his famous book, *Force and Matter*,[208] without any credit to the original author.

Dr. Cyriex remarked on this, and when Büchner traveled to the U.S. to give a series of lectures, he went to Cleveland and asked to see Hudson Tuttle, “hoping to meet,” he said, “the man who had been so helpful in my work.”

The medium was introduced to him at a banquet, but Büchner was greatly disappointed when he saw the young man; and when he learned of the manner in which the *Arcana* had been written, he thought he had been the victim of a farce. A Mr. Teime (?) and Dr. Bernard Cyriax, editor of the German newspaper of Cleveland (U.S.), *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter*, had great difficulty in dissuading him.[209]

The great Romanian writer and philologist Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, who was also a senator and historian, was fifty-three years old when he lost his only daughter, who died at the age of sixteen from tuberculosis. This loss changed Hasdeu’s mindset, who even explained his initiation into Spiritism in the prologue of *Sic Cogito* [*This Is How I Think*] (Bucharest, 1892), the only one of his works written in this vein.

“It happened six months after my daughter died. It was March [1889]: winter had gone; spring had not arrived yet. On a wet and sultry evening I sat

alone in the room, next to my work table. Before me, as usual, there was a ream of paper and several pencils. How? I do not know; but without knowing it, my hand took a pencil and pressed the point on the glossy paper. I began to feel short and deep strokes in my left temple, just as if a telegraph device had been inserted there. Suddenly my hand was put into motion without stopping. About five seconds at most. When my arm stopped and the pencil dropped from between my fingers, I felt awake from sleep, although I was sure I had not been asleep. I took a glance at the sheet of paper where I could read very clearly written:"

"*Je suis heureuse; je t'aime, nous nous reverrons; cela doit te suffire.*[210] [*I am happy; I love you, we shall meet; this should suffice you.*] *Julie Hasdeu*"

"It was written and signed in my daughter's own handwriting."

The whole *Sic Cogito* was set to explain this event, the first in a series of Spiritist communications which took place between the spirit of Julie (Iulia) Hasdeu – or "Lilica" as her father used to call her – and the extremely sharp and suggestible intelligence of Bogdan Hasdeu.

Since then, mediumistic communications started to have an influence even on Hasdeu's literary works. In an article about him, published in the *Mercure de France* of November 16, 1907, Mr. Craiovan reproduces the facsimile of a few lines of automatic writing obtained by Hasdeu in a Spiritist seance which took place at the latter's home on November 13, 1890 , and was attended by Dr. S. Steiner, Prof. Bonifatiu Floresen T. Sperantia, Chevalier de Suzzara, the Austro-Hungarian Consul-General, and Vasile Cosmovici, who was the medium. Suddenly Hasdeu received a Russian communication, supposedly from his father, which read as follows: "As heir to the family you should perpetuate the treasure of the Moldavian tongue: *Etymologicum magnum Romanicum*."

"This automatic document always had for Hasdeu the importance of an actual revelation: it proved to him the reality of the inspirations of his mental life. He has related at length and not without some critical acumen, the reason which led him to believe in the spiritistic character of this communication. He was, moreover, already impressed by the idea expressed by Louis Figuier, an artist, writer and thinker, who, after the death of a beloved being, felt his faculties, inspirations and powers increased. It would seem as if the intellectual faculties of the deceased person were combined with and enriched

the genius of the living. In any case, this mediumistic communication was the means of enriching Romania with a philological work, which, although incomplete, is certainly one of the best treasures of the Romanian language."

"When on one occasion his Spiritism ('the only experimental religion' which he regarded as possible) was attacked with ridicule, Hasdeu felt compelled to demonstrate his sincerity. 'In history,' he wrote, 'in philology, in all spheres of knowledge, I have always been *skeptical*, rejecting authority, indifferent to popularity, and relying only and alone on my own researches, by going to the sources of knowledge in everything, making for myself a way (good or bad) according to my understanding, but with a pure heart, without fear of man, without personal aims, without flattery, without self-aggrandizement.' (*Sic Cogito*. Chapter 1.)" [211]

The Reverend William Stainton Moses, a learned scholar, thinker, and cleric of the Anglican Church, who was wholly imbued with the dogmas of Protestant theology, also became a mechanical writing medium. In his book *Spirit Teachings*, he describes the state of mind in which he received the communications of the unseen world. The new ideas contained in such messages raised objections on his part, and it was only after much inner struggle that he ended up adopting them as more in conformity with God's justice and goodness.

He always took extreme pains to prevent his own thoughts from exerting any influence on the subjects being treated, even to the point of applying himself to the reading of books in Greek at the moment when his hand was being moved.

There existed such a divergence of views between him and his spirit instructors, known under the names of Imperator, Rector, and Prudens, that it is really impossible to ascribe these distinct personalities to unconscious duplications of the medium himself.

Stainton Moses asserted that these spirits had often revealed to him facts absolutely unknown to all persons participating in the sittings; facts which were subsequently proved to be accurate. Here is one of these cases, extracted from the book mentioned above:[212]

"On March 29th, 1874, a communication was written out in my book, of which at first I could make nothing. The handwriting was like none I had seen before, very shaky and tremulous, like that of an extremely old and feeble person. Though a name was apparently signed, I could not read it at all

until it was deciphered for me by the spirit-amanuensis.[213] The message was from a very old woman, of whom I had never before heard, who passed away at upwards of 90 years of age at a house not far from the place where our circle meets ... the name, place of residence, both in earlier years and at the time of death, age, and date of decease, were given with exact accuracy. The remarkable fact, for which (apparently) the message was given, was that the time of departure from earth was in the month of December, 1872, since which time, as was said, 'the spirit being full of years in its earth-life had rested from its earthly toil.' On awaking it had been attracted to its old home, and thence to the circle in the immediate neighborhood."

We find the same phenomena in France. A number of books have been written or dictated by spirits.

Among them the following may be cited: *La Clef de la Vie* [*The Key of Life*],[214] two large volumes written in 1856 by Louis-Michel de Figanières, a young peasant from the Var region, aged 22, as reported in the newspaper *Le Siècle*, which published a fine article signed by Louis Jourdan; and *Les vies Mystérieuses et Successives de l'Être Humain et de l'Être Terre* [*The Mysterious and Successive Lives of Human Beings and Earth Beings*];[215]and *Les Origines et les Fins* [*The Origins and the Ends*],[216] a book obtained through the mediumistic work of three ladies of the city of Lyon, by superimposing their hands on one another.

Moreover, I should mention the book *La Survie, Échos de l'Au-delà* [*The Survival, Echoes of the Hereafter*], containing a collection of remarkable communications dictated by spirits and published by Mrs. R. Noeggerath in 1807,[217] with a preface by Camille Flammarion.

The *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Nancy* (France), 1901, [218] published a report made during a seance of this Society, on March 29, by Mr. Fouquet, editor-in-chief of *L'Étoile de l'Est*, about mediumistic writing obtained in his presence by Mr P—, an inveterate materialist who was also his contributor. The following passages are excerpted from his article:

"The writing varied infinitely, according to the spirit that happened to be dictating it. Each writing was easily recognizable, and from the first words we knew who we were dealing with. In these dissimilar writings I never recognized that of P—, and it would have required a remarkable talent for forgery, to make him take on so many forms."

"P— remained absolutely unaware of what he wrote. While his hand

traced the characters, his gaze became slightly fixed and was never directed toward the paper sheet. But throughout, he never fell asleep."

"One day a new personality introduced itself as Alphantis, telling us that he lived in the seventh century in Armenia, where he had been pontiff. We believed it to be a mystification, and told him, 'Give us your name in Armenian writing then.'"

"The medium's writing instantly changed, and we could see a kind of signature appear in unknown characters, followed by a whole sentence in analogous characters, and then a translation."

"None of us knew Armenian, so we could not check it out. I had the idea of asking the communicating spirit for the Armenian alphabet, in order to have a means of control. The alphabet came alongside the corresponding Latin letters. By comparing this alphabet with the phrases written before, and the very name Alphantis, we recognized a concordance between them."

"Alphantis furnished us details of ancient Armenia's history and geography, which we were able to partially verify. The medium had no previous knowledge of any of those details."

The experimenters could not procure any fragment of Armenian writing of the seventh century, having instead only one sentence in modern Armenian. Though very different from each other, as modern French would be if compared with that of the seventh century, the spirit could still translate it, and a Bulgarian student, who knew a little Armenian, confirmed the translation.

The following paragraphs are borrowed from the presentation given by Dr. Dusart at the Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress of Paris, in 1900,[219] regarding the writing mediums that he used in his experiments:

"*Automatic Writing*. Maria wrote from the very first day. The character of the writing and the spelling varied with each of her spirit controls ... The control's identity is often recognized before seeing the signature. In several cases, comparison between the mediumistic writing and that of the living revealed striking similarities."

"I was told of a nine-month-old baby, who, held by his father above a sheet of paper, drew a few words of communication ... Communications written by three other children: Élise aged 23 months, Céline aged 3 years, and Louise 4 years old, who ... wrote, alone or together at the same table. The communications thus obtained were always related to incidents or

preoccupations of the moment, and when they wrote simultaneously at the same table, they presented the same thought in three different forms ... Céline shook her right hand as if to escape an embrace."

"Mrs. B—, a worker in the fields ... [was] so completely illiterate that more than a month of lessons and efforts could not manage to teach her to write her signature which was required for a notarial act. Under the influence of a spirit control ... her very rough hand covered half a page with shapeless scribbles, then came a sentence more or less long ... containing advice."

From Milan (Italy), the journal *Luce e Ombra* of July 1905 reports the following fact:[220]

"A humble janitor of the General Post Office, named Peziardi, scarcely knew a little Italian, but nevertheless was able to write poems in languages unknown to him. One evening he filled a large page of official paper with a series of signs that no one could decipher. This strange handwriting was presented to Professor Gorresio, a famous paleographer, then director of the University Library. Deeply stupefied, the latter asked who had written such a page, and was informed of the whole story. It would be impossible to describe the astonishment of the scientist, and even more that of his visitor, when he learned that this writing was the complete reproduction of a runic inscription, which for many years remained unexplained at the Archeology Museum, and which Gorresio had attempted to decipher on several occasions to no avail, because time had effaced many of the signs. Moreover, as the stone slab was broken, it had been impossible to guess the missing end of the inscription. Now, in possession of the complete runic text, he could read that a certain ancient Nordic chief invoked the protection of the divinity over his tribe, etc. From that day on, Gorresio converted to Spiritism. In a subsequent sitting the spirit of the Nordic chief manifested itself, declaring the paleographer's translation to be correct, and adding that his inscription had been broken by a thunderbolt."

Under the name of *cross-correspondence*, British experimenters devised a new method of communication through mediumistic writing, which would be able to establish, in a more precise way, the identity of the communicating spirits. Sir Oliver Lodge, Rector of the University of Birmingham, reported on these experiences in his address to the Society for Psychical Research on January 30, 1908:[221]

"We find the late Edmund Gurney and the late Richard Hodgson and the

late F. W. H. Myers, with some other less known names, constantly purporting to communicate with us, with the express purpose of patiently proving their identity. We also find them answering specific questions in a manner characteristic of their known personalities, and giving evidence of knowledge appropriate to them ..."

"The ostensible communicators realize the need of such proof just as fully as we do, and have do their best to satisfy the rational demand. Some of us think they have already succeeded; others are still doubtful."

"I am one of those who, though they would like to see further and still stronger and more continued proofs, are of the opinion that a good case has been made out, and that, as the best working hypothesis at the present time, it is legitimate to grant that lucid moments of [interchange] with deceased persons may in the best cases supervene amid a mass of supplementary material ..."

"Cross-correspondence," continues Sir Oliver, "– that is, the reception of part of a message through one medium and part through another, neither portion separately being understood by either – is good evidence of one intelligence dominating both automatists. And if the message is characteristic of some one particular deceased person, and is received as such by people to whom he was not intimately known, then it is fair proof of the continued intellectual activity of that person. If, further, we get from him a piece of literary criticism which is eminently in his vein, and has not occurred to ordinary people, then I say the proof, already striking, is tending to become crucial. These are the kinds of proof which the Society has had communicated to it. The boundary between the two states – the present and the future – is still substantial, but it is wearing thin in places. Like excavators engaged in boring a tunnel from opposite ends, amid the roar of water and other noises we are beginning to hear, now and again, the strokes of the pickaxes of our comrades on the other side."

The British spirit of initiative did not stop there. They established a regular communications office with the world beyond. It was founded in London by the intrepid editor and writer William Thomas Stead, at the insistence of a deceased friend of his, American journalist Julia Ames; hence its name, *Julia's Bureau*. Her spirit wanted to come to the aid of all the discarnate seeking to enter into contact with the living left behind, as well as with the incarnate beings, distressed by the loss of their nearest and dearest relations.

To be allowed to ask for a communication, the Spirit Julia, which directs the sittings itself, requires only two things: a sincere and wholesome affection between the living and the dead, as well as a preliminary assessment of the Spiritist issue at hand. Julia refuses any reward whatever. The consulter, after his or her request has been taken into consideration, is referred to three different mediums, and all the results are recorded.

Since its inception, Julia's Bureau has already been able to establish many contacts with the invisible plane. "Bridging the river of death," as W. T. Stead said with some reason.[222]

The clientele of Julia's Bureau (or Bridge Bureau) was recruited mainly from educated and enlightened individuals: doctors, professors, lawyers, and so on. A reporter of a British newspaper, *The Daily News*, writes that one day he accompanied a well-known author there, whose name cause great surprise, if revealed in connection in with this sort of activity. The said author wanted to obtain the manifestation of a deceased friend. Julia's consent was granted and, according to custom, he was put in touch in succession with three mediums assisted by a stenographer, and a detailed report of each sitting was created. At one of these sittings, his abode was described exactly with all its surroundings. In another seance, he received a message which he deemed certain to have come from his deceased friend.

Mr. Stead made a report published by the London newspaper *Light*. According to him, in the course of two years, five hundred requests came from all over of the world. Of this number, one hundred and twenty-six have never made known the results obtained. One hundred and seventy-one wrote that they were convinced that they had been put in communication with their deceased relatives. Eighty responded that the outcome was somewhat satisfactory, but they would not go so far as to assert it. Finally, fifty-three individuals said that they had not received a communication from their nearest and dearest. Successes were more numerous than expected, and likely to destroy the hypothesis that telepathy can be proposed to explain the messages obtained. The consulters also stated that when they focused on a subject, it was never the one that was dealt with in the communications, and the evidence obtained was not the evidence sought by their questions. So telepathy cannot account for such facts.

The study of these phenomena shows that writing mediums should be classed into three categories according to the nature of their faculties, namely:

1. *Automatic writers*. These purely mechanical mediums are not aware of what they write; their arm alone is influenced; their movements are abrupt and jerky, and they sometimes have some difficulty in reading what they have obtained. This faculty is the one that offers the greatest degree of certainty, since the medium is only an instrument, or rather a passive agent, whose will and thoughts remain independent of the movements of the hand.

2. *Semi-mechanical writers*, in whom the brain and the hand are equally influenced. They are conscious of what they write, and the words come to their mind at the very moment when they are being formed on paper.

3. *Intuitive or inspirational writers*, whose brain alone is influenced. This faculty is uncertain and sometimes misleading, for the thoughts of the subject are frequently mingled with those of the hidden inspiration, and it is difficult to discern them from one another. Hence the hesitation of certain mediums of this order. However, they should not neglect this mode of working, which is perfected through practice, and may become in time a precious method of communication.

I have often noticed this fact in intuitive mediumship. The intellectual part of the medium, which at first is considerable in the messages – to the extent that one can even hesitate as to the very nature of such faculty – gradually diminishes, and the part of the spirit gradually increases, to the point of becoming predominant. In communications thus obtained, we shall always find terms, turns of phrases and modes of expression commonly used and typical of the medium; yet the originality, the divergence of the ideas and views expressed will assert themselves more and more, as well as their superiority over those of the sensitive.

To mediums who are inclined to attribute to themselves the exclusive merit of the communications obtained, I would like note the following fact, reported by Captain Bloume in his letter to Mr. Louis Gardy, published by *Le Messager*, of Liège (Belgium), on April 15, 1900:

“In a group of officers of the 57th Infantry Regiment, a sub-lieutenant,

who was a man of very ordinary mind and intelligence, with little education, but a good medium nevertheless, thought it better to draw from his own head some exceedingly beautiful moral messages, and started to think that he himself was infinitely talented as a writer. Then one fine day, during a weekly sitting, right in the middle of a fine sentence, he halted and could not proceed. His mind went blank and could produce absolutely nothing. At this point, another medium explained that, without being requested to do so, the spirits had taught the presumptuous medium a lesson of humility."

"At another seance, the same medium wrote three completely different messages on three juxtaposed sheets of paper, writing only one line on each sheet successively, with the utmost clarity and his usual rapidity."

In many experimental seances, we have frequently asked intuitive mediums impromptu questions of a very high order, intentionally abstract and far above their personal conceptions. They were all resolved in one stroke, in very broad messages, whose form, which was as remarkable as their substance, contained neither corrections nor erasures, which the sensitives would have been incapable of doing, if let to their own means, without any hidden assistance.

Despite the differences of opinion and religious backgrounds which distinguished our mediums from the other, all the teachings received by them concerning future life and the evolution of souls were identical in outline. One of them, who was quite opposed to the belief in successive existences, received daily communications about reincarnation and its laws. Others, very imbued with the orthodox ideas of Catholicism or Protestantism, obtained messages showing that the conceptions of heaven and hell are erroneous or at least allegorical, and are not based on anything real; in a nutshell, a whole set of notions about the Hereafter differed essentially from those familiar to them and that had been deeply instilled in them from childhood.

These manifestations were often confirmed by sights and descriptions of the spirits that were standing near the sensitives, directing and inspiring them. Under these conditions, the seeing medium supplemented the writing medium. It is well, then, to have in a group, several mediums whose various faculties may be controlled (i.e., checked) by one another.

As pointed out before, intuitive mediumship should not be disdained, since it may increase and become more precise through practice. However – and this applies to all mediumistic productions – we should never neglect to

submit the results to our reason and scrutiny.

Credulity is no less noxious than uncompromising skepticism. Discernment and a certain amount of scientific knowledge are both necessary to determine the true origin and value of such communications, so as to allow one to distinguish the different causes in action during these phenomena.

The authenticity of these messages is sometimes difficult to ascertain. The abuse of famous names, honored personalities in human history, frequently occurs and becomes an element of doubt and uncertainty for observers. Certain productions, deplorably banal and stylistically incorrect, yet signed by venerable names, awaken suspicion and cause many people to regard Spiritism as a gross mystification. For the cold and impartial observer, these abuses simply demonstrate one thing, namely, that the author of such messages is not always what it claims to be. In the invisible world, just as in ours, there are deceptive spirits, always ready to adorn themselves with titles or merits to which they have no right whatsoever, in order to impose themselves on the gullible.

It is therefore necessary to attach much more importance to the actual content of a communication than to the name that signs it. A carpenter is known by his chips. In order to make themselves recognized by us, truly elevated spirits will willingly adopt allegorical pseudonyms, instead of the names they bore when on Earth.

In principle, names and titles do not have the importance in the Hereafter that we attach to them. Judgments of merit on the spiritual plane are not the same as on Earth, and many of the names which shine in human history are eclipsed in the life beyond. Works of pride have little place in it. Only works of devotion, charitable love, and love itself confer enduring titles. Those who have been engaged in them have not always left their names in the memory of humans. They managed to live inconspicuously, almost unknown here below, but divine law has consecrated their existence, and their soul radiates a splendor which many spirits, reputed to be great among us, are far from possessing.

In the nether regions of the spirit world, as on Earth, there are deceiving spirits that are keen on presenting their conceptions under the guise of resounding names. In them, error is concealed in grandiloquent or seductive forms, which create an illusion made all the more dangerous because of that. It is above all on these cases that judgment must be exercised. We must not

adopt the views of a spirit, merely because it is a spirit, but rather only if we deem them righteous and good. We must discuss and control the productions coming from the Hereafter with the same freedom of scrutiny that we use when dealing with earthly authors. A spirit is but a human being stripped of his or her fleshly envelope. Death he does not grant it infallibility. The space surrounding us is populated by an invisible crowd of little-evolved spirits. However, above them, there are higher and noble intelligences whose teachings should be precious to us. We can recognize them by the wisdom which inspires them, and by the clarity and grandeur of their views.

At times, an objection has been posed to us regarding the fact that several different groups evoke the same spirit at the same time to obtain messages signed by it. Should we always see evidence of trickery in this? Definitely not. We know that the power of thought increases with the elevation of the spirit, whose radiance can then embrace a vast extent. Once the soul achieves a high degree of progress, it becomes a powerful focal point, whose radiations can reach wherever an appeal or evocation is made. This is what leads us to believe, in certain cases, in the gift of ubiquity.

The deficiency of certain communications does not derive only from those who dictate them. It can also be ascribed to a lack of aptitude, expertise and knowledge on the part of the medium that receives them. Spirits of true value are sometimes reduced to resorting to very imperfect instruments by means of which we obtain only feeble manifestations of their thought and faint reflections of their genius.

In the majority of cases, imperfect mediums only succeed in transmitting mediocre communications, in terms of language and wealth of ideas, yet there are also those whose admirable mediumistic organisms lend themselves to the task with a prodigious facility for conveying the intended spirit messages. That was the case of the duchess of P— in Paris, and in other circles, of a young medium called Miss J. D., who, in near darkness, was able to cover numerous pages in quick and compact handwriting, all in a very short time. These messages always dealt with the highest philosophical and moral questions. They expressed the noblest thoughts in a style full of grandeur. It is profoundly charming to hear them being read out, and although they bear no signature, there is no doubt that they emanated from the most brilliant intelligences of the spirit world.

Inconsistencies found among certain messages, and scarce proof of spirit

identity, have also been major causes of uncertainty. For example, communications signed by our deceased relatives do not always provide the character of authenticity that we would like to find in them. Many inconsistencies must be attributed to obstacles encountered by the communicating spirits, rather than to any intention of deceiving. If those we evoke lack aptitude, they must resort to more experienced spirits to act as intermediaries under their names, in order to make the communication more intelligible, or more effective. Hence, certain inaccuracies or defects imputable to the transmitters.

Our means of perception, investigation and control are still feeble, and in most cases we fail to do what is really necessary, such as adopting a method of psychical and moral training that would render the communications more perfect.

In inspirational mediums, reason must be balanced by intuition. The latter is always reliable and fertile when coming from lofty souls; whereas it is sometimes disappointing and dangerous when emanating from lower-order spirits with their erroneous ideas and judgments.

In this, as in all that regards our rapport with the hidden world, there is only one rule, namely to spiritualize oneself.

Matter is like a wall that stands between us and the unseen. By all means, let us try to attenuate its opacity. To do this, we must appeal to the higher beings and, through the radiations of our souls, facilitate communion with them. Let us use the faculties granted to us only with respect and disinterestedness, that is to say, never use them for material interests or causes, but only for the sake of our moral good. The more a medium is detached from earthly influences, the more his or her faculties grow and refine themselves.

On occasion, mediumistic writing assumes the most bizarre forms. Although they would not be able to produce it without a hidden influence, certain mediums obtain reversed writing, also known as *mirror-writing*, readable only by means of a mirror. Others write backward, so that one must read their productions in the opposite direction, as sentences begin with the

last letter and end with the first.

In the SPR *Proceedings*, Frederic H. W. Myers cites the following case:

"One of my sisters, a clergyman's wife, once tried to persuade me that all so-called automatic writing was in some unconscious way really the act of the 'medium' through whose hand it came, and to prove it, said, 'If I were to hold a pencil to the end of time my hand would never write anything unless I willed it to do so.' She took pencil and paper; her hand soon began to move, in spite of all her efforts to keep it still, and after scrawling a quantity of unmeaning circles and zigzags, produced something that looked like writing, but which neither of us could decipher. She laid down the pencil and took up some other occupation. Suddenly, after some time had elapsed, it occurred to one of us, I forget which, that she might have been writing backwards. On holding the paper up to the looking-glass she found that she had written, quite legibly, 'Unkind. My name is Norman.' Before this was written she had asked the supposed spirit for its name, and had jeered at it for its apparent inability to reply."[223]

It is obvious that the hostile will of the sensitive would have prevented the spirit from writing the message, if her eyes could have followed the formation of characters in the normal direction.

To this order of phenomena belongs a whole series of productions which I cannot pass over in silence. These are drawings executed either in pen and ink or in pencil by people who have no notion of drawing. They cover the paper with plant leaves, strange and graceful flowers, brilliant hues, arabesques, animals, sometimes of pure fantasy, sometimes imitating the flora or fauna of distant planets.

Victorien Sardou obtained engravings representing ideal constructions. Hugo d'Alési sketched portraits of deceased persons who were resembling them. Hélène Smith, while altogether ignoring painting, could paint impressive pictures. Rosa Agullana and Segundo Oliver obtained disturbing drawings, ornaments, flowers and odd figures, or produced charming works. It can be said that mediumship lends itself to a thousand varied works. A good medium is like a harp which vibrates at the stroke of spirits.

During the International Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress held in September 1900, in Athens, a number of these works were exhibited for the public's observation in a special room at Athènes Street.

A series of portraits obtained automatically by Mr. Fernand Desmoulins, a

talented painter well known in Parisian circles, attracted particular attention. There were depictions of dream and terror, the sight of which caused a certain uneasiness; delightful profiles with melancholy smiles; heads of tortured individuals expressing horrible pain; faces of extraordinary intensity of expression, with inquiring or supplicating looks.

These drawings had been executed, sometimes sideways, more often upside down, sometimes in the darkness or with closed eyes, always under the influence of a foreign will, an invisible being which signed them “l’instituteur” (“the instructor”).

Mr. Desmoulins takes from ten to twenty minutes to produce these drawings, whereas it would normally take five or six days to compose one of his own. His hand sketches them with dizzy rapidity, without the slightest awareness of what he is doing. He watches his hand drawing with curious interest. He said that himself:[224]

“[My hand] works like Rodin’s. Often, it is dragged along with the rapidity of a bolt of lightning, in a sort of whirlwind or dizzying gyration. Curves, volutes and straight lines; eyes, nose, mouth and hair, everything is sketched, drawn and shaded in no time. An upside-down portrait depicts an old woman with a contracted face, resting her hand on her forehead. Now, I began by drawing an arm in reverse, and as it was naturally impossible for me to guess that I was drawing an arm, I tried to figure out exactly what I was penciling.”

“When the spirit wants to make certain changes through me, it proceeds as follows: Oblivious to my will, my pencil first traces a small circle on a specific part of the drawing, the one that the spirit wants to modify. Then the tip of my pencil is led outside the drawn part, to a corner of the paper, where it writes: ‘erase.’ I know what that means; with my eraser I erase the portion surrounded by the circle then pick up my pencil again.”

“It takes especial pleasure in astonishing me. In this way it made me produce several portraits of persons whom I had never seen before, and who had been either deceased relatives or friends of people surrounding me, who in turn were astonished themselves, and ascribed to me the ability to take snapshots of the unseen.”

“Being precise and scrupulous by nature, I have no stylistic connection with this extravagant ‘instructor’ that makes a portrait beginning where it should end, while never worrying where it will place the eyes, nose and

mouth.”

Thus, through a myriad of strange, varied, and unexpected forms, the communion of the seen with the unseen asserts the collaboration of humans and spirits. And hence we learn that there is no real death. All souls are active and working whether in spirit or in flesh. Life has many different facets but it is endless!

XIX

Trance and Incorporations[225]

Trance is the name [226] given to a state of magnetic sleep which allows one's fluidic body to exteriorize itself, while freeing itself from the fleshly body; and the soul to regain for an instant its freedom and independence. Yet this separation is never complete; absolute separation would result in bodily death. An invisible bond continues to link the soul to its earthly envelope. Similar to the telephone wire which ensures transmission between two points, this fluidic cord or bond allows the emancipated soul to transmit its impressions through the organs of the sleeping body. In trance, the medium speaks, moves, or writes automatically; however, retains no memory of these actions upon awakening.

A state of trance may be induced either by a magnetizer's action, or that of a spirit. Under magnetic impulsion, the bonds which unite the physical to the fluidic body are loosened. Then the soul with its subtle body emancipates itself little by little and recovers the use of its hidden powers, which lay constricted by matter's limitations. The deeper the slumber, the greater the disengagement. The radiations of the psyche intensify and spread; a different state of consciousness with new faculties come to the fore. A whole world of memories and knowledge, which lay buried in the depths of the self, is awakened. The medium can, under the influence of a superior will, reconstitute itself in one of its previous existences, revive it in all its details, with the attitudes, the language, the attributes that characterized that existence. At the same time, the psychical senses come into play. Remote viewing and hearing occur all the more clearly and precisely, since now the output of the mediumistic organism is more complete.

In the medium's temporarily vacant body, a spirit replacement can take place. These are the phenomena known as "incorporations" (psychophonies). The soul of a deceased person, even the soul of a sleeping living being, can take the place of the medium's spirit and use his or her material body to communicate through speech and gesture with those present.

Eminent scholars and scientists have testified to the reality of these facts.

Birmingham University Rector Oliver Lodge said the following in his address to the SPR, in London, on January 31, 1902:[227]

“An elaborate machine like our bodies is capable of being occasionally used, not only by the mind or intelligence which manufactured it, so to speak, but temporarily and with difficulty by other minds or intelligences permitted to make use of it.”

In his paper sent to the 4th International Congress of Psychology, Paris, 1900,[228] Professor F. W. H. Myers, of Cambridge (UK), was even more emphatic. After having enumerated the phenomena obtained in a trance state by Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Thompson, which he had studied for twenty-five years, he concluded thus:

“Most of the recorded phenomena suggest the personality and memory of certain dead persons ... I claim that this substitution of personality, or spirit-control, or possession, is a normal forward step in the evolution of our race.”

During trance, the medium’s soul stands at a slight distance from the body. It remains almost always blended with the spiritual group that surrounds its earthly envelope. Sometimes the medium’s influence is still felt over the body, attracted back to it by virtue of habit. Its action then becomes an inconvenience, a hindrance to the communicating spirits.

When the hidden force is insufficient and the trance is shallow, the disengagement from the body remains incomplete, and the personalities mingle. The medium resists the external action of the communicating spirit, which makes an effort to take possession of its organs. The medium’s psychical radiations are mixed up with those of the spirit. Hence, in proportions varying according to each case, two parts share the manifestations: that of the medium and that of the spirit, in a delicate operation which requires a thorough knowledge of the personalities involved and the conditions of the phenomenon.

The state of trance facilitates suggestion. In the phenomena of writing and by means of the table, the medium remains in full possession of self, of his or her will, and may even reject the inspirations received. In an out-of-body state it is no longer so. The soul has withdrawn and the material brain is left open to all influences. When it is insufficiently protected, the medium can undergo suggestions not only from the magnetizer but from the sitters or from a spirit as well. This is what sometimes creates a certain confusion in the interpretation of the phenomena, and should require great caution on the

part of the experimenters. In such cases, it is difficult to distinguish the real nature of the acting influences. As Hudson Tuttle, who was himself a medium, points out in his book *Arcana of Spiritualism*: [229]

"If the medium is in the peculiar susceptible condition usual to the early stage of development, he will simply reflect the mind of the circle; and what purports to be a spiritual communication will be only an echo of the minds of the members."

That is why it is preferable to allow the spirits to act alone on the medium, and thus abstain from any human magnetic intervention. This is what we have always done in our experimental studies. In the rare instances in which the psychical force has suddenly failed the mediums, the spirit entities entreated us to act upon them by means of passes. Such fleeting intervention was enough to make sitters believe in a suggestive action on our part.

Most often, the magnetizer's fluids, due to their particular vibratory state, counteract those of the spirits, instead of helping them. They are forced to engage in adaptive work which uses up forces indispensable for producing phenomena. A magnetizer whose fluids are not pure, whose character is not righteous, and whose morality is far from perfect, can even unintentionally influence a medium in the most unfavorable sense.

Even when the hidden action is powerful and well established, it is still necessary to take into account the hindrance to the spirit, which must communicate with the aid of an extraneous organism, often with limited resources. A state of harmony between the faculties of the spirit and those of the medium seldom exists, since the evolution degree of their brains is not identical, and the manifestations may be thwarted because of that. This is what some Entities told us during our "incorporation" (psychophony) experiments: "We are closely confined; we lack sufficient means to express our thoughts. The physical particles of the brain are too coarse to vibrate under our action, thus our communications are considerably weakened."

Robert Hyslop's spirit said the same to his son, Prof. James Hyslop. He claimed that when entering the earthly atmosphere and into the medium's organism, things became diminished for him: "Everything seems so clear to me, and when I try to tell you, James, I cannot."[230]

However, when a medium of real value is available, control by the spirit is complete and the force sufficient to avoid antagonistic influences, one may witness imposing phenomena. The spirit manifests itself in the fullness of its

own self, in all its originality; and then the phenomenon of “incorporation” (psychophony) shows itself superior to all the others.

Some experimenters ask themselves the following question: Does spirit “incorporation”[231] really takes place into the body of a medium? Or is it actually the result of remote action through mental suggestion and thought transmission, in the same way that the exteriorized soul of a medium can sometimes do?

Upon close examination of such phenomena I am led to believe that these two explanations are equally admissible, depending on the case. The cases that were cited above should serve as proof that “incorporation” (psychophony) can be real and complete. Sometimes it may be even unconscious when, for example, some less advanced spirits are driven by the will of a higher order one into the body of a medium and put in communication with us in order to be enlightened about their true condition.

These spirits, troubled by death, continue to believe long afterwards that they still belong to earthly life. Since their coarse fluids do not allow them to come into contact with higher order entities, they are brought into mediumistic groups to be counseled in their new condition. It is sometimes difficult to make them understand that they have abandoned their fleshly life behind, and their astonishment verges on the comical when, being invited to compare the medium’s organism that they are momentarily animating with the body they once inhabited on Earth, they find themselves forced to acknowledge their mistake. There can be no doubt, in this case, of a complete “incorporation”[232] of the spirit.

In other circumstances, the theory of remote transmission seems to better explain the phenomena. The impressions coming from beyond are more or less accurately perceived and transmitted by the organs. Besides evidence of identity which allows no hesitation as to the authenticity of the phenomenon and spirit intervention, one finds in the language of the entranced medium, expressions, some turns of phrases, and pronunciation which are typical of the latter. The spirit seems to project its thought into the medium’s brain, where it borrows in passing from those language forms familiar to the medium. Transmission is then carried out within the limits of the sensitive’s knowledge and aptitudes, either in common phrases or choice words, according to the medium’s degree of education. Hence certain inconsistencies that should also be ascribed to the imperfection of the mediumistic

instrument.

Upon awakening, the medium's soul retains no consciousness of events that had happened while he or she was freed from the body. So mediums have no recollection of the role their bodies played in the phenomena which took place during trance. Once having regained their psychical senses, these are extinguished again by the veil of dense matter; night falls over them; all memory vanishes. Furthermore, the medium wakes up in a state of turmoil that gradually dissipates.

At times the return to the body brings about heartbreaking scenes, when the medium, during the exteriorization, has been reunited with loved ones on the spiritual plane and, at the moment preceding awakening, can still retain the impression left by such meeting. The contrast between the free and luminous life that mediums have just enjoyed, and the obscure jail into which they must now descend, may cause tears and regrets, repugnance to re-enter into the flesh, which result in complaints and moving appeals. I have often witnessed scenes of this kind.

Since it is not feasible here to examine every single fact connected with trance phenomena, I shall confine myself to citing the most important cases which have been reported by various scientists during the past years, then add a few cases observed by myself.

At the forefront, stand the manifestations obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper.

For a long time, this lady was contractually bound to the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) of which I have already spoken above, and which had a branch in London and another in New York. Mrs. Piper was the principal agent of the experiments pursued in these circles by scholars and scientists such as Professors Lodge, Myers, Hodgson, W. James, Hyslop, among others, all of whom were associated with British or American universities. The most competent professional that can be cited in matters of psychism. The study of Mrs. Piper's faculties was the subject of numerous sittings, whose results were recorded in the *Proceedings of the SPR* of 1901, forming a volume of 650 pages.[233]

As attested by the experimenters, Mrs. Piper enjoyed excellent health.

There were no hereditary defects in her family. Only twice during the experiments, in 1893 and 1895, did she fall ill. Each time her mediumistic faculties dropped, and no good communications could be obtained.

Mrs. Piper was continually and closely monitored. Detectives followed her steps and watched her every move; every measure was taken to discover the source from which she might have obtained the information displayed in her communications. During her stay in England with Professors Myers and Lodge, she was kept isolated, deprived of all external contact. Her baggage trunks were searched and her letters opened and read at her request. Nothing suspicious was ever found. On the contrary, the more rigorous the surveillance, the more assured and certain the manifestations became.

When entranced, she is insensitive to pain and the globes of her eyes turn back in their orbits. Then she either speaks or writes, and the voice changes with each different spirit. All the questions asked were brief; she never knew who would ask them, for the consulters were introduced to her during her sleep, and uniformly called by the assumed name of “Mr. Smith.” Some of them went to the lengths of keeping their disguise until they came back to their vehicles, by having their faces covered with a mask.

An early testimony deserves our full attention. It comes from Dr. Richard Hodgson, vice-president of the American section of the SPR, who discussed the study of Spiritist phenomena with rigorous critical examination. He it was who had studied the extraordinary phenomena attributed to Mrs. Blavatsky and concluded that she was deceitful. He had also pointed out the unconscious frauds committed by Eusapia Paladino, and for years proved himself a fierce opponent of mediumship. This is what he states in the *Proceedings*: [234]

“During a period of twelve years I have had, through the mediumship of Mrs. Piper, communications with the ‘spirits’ of those who have been for some time dead. During the first few years I absolutely disbelieved in her power. I had but one object, to discover fraud and trickery ... I went to Mrs. Piper ... with the object of unmasking her ... I entered the house profoundly materialistic, not believing in the continuance of life after death, and today I simply say, I believe. The proof has been given to me in such a way as to remove from me the possibility of a doubt.”

In order to transform so radically the opinion of a man so cautiously biased as Dr. Hodgson, some very powerful phenomena were required. The

most significant of which was the spontaneous manifestation of his friend George Pellew (alias Pelham), a man of letters, who had died a few months earlier, and whom the medium could not possibly have known. The identity of the deceased was established in a very precise manner during numerous interviews.

Dr. Hodgson brought all the old friends of G. Pelham that he could find (about thirty) near the sleeping medium. The spirit was able to recognize them all on their arrival, and welcomed them with jests. Not only did the spirit call them by their names, but spoke to them in the same familiar tone, using the usual expressions he used to employ with each of them, according to the degree of intimacy that bound them up on Earth. And all this in the most spontaneous way, without the least hesitation on the part of the medium. To each and every one, the spirit provided the most thorough proofs of identity.

One of them, Professor Newbold, proposed to Pelham a translation from the Greek, a language well known to him, which Mrs. Piper absolutely ignored. The spirit translated perfectly, following literally the Greek text.

During the first phase of the experiments, the medium was influenced, directed, and controlled (according to the American expression) by lower order spirits. A certain Phinuit answered incoherently to the questions posed, and a great deal of Anglo-Saxon patience was required in order to follow the development of the phenomenon for years, through the labyrinth of this spirit’s ramblings. French investigators would probably not have such perseverance and, instead, would have lost all the benefits brought about later by the convincing and reliable manifestations that were obtained after this confusing period.

With G. Pelham the communications became clearer but, in the long run, there was a lack of adequate command. As spirits, Phinuit and Pelham were not powerful enough to maintain the trance in a deep state, and thus prevent the medium’s personality from disturbing and interfering in the phenomena. Stimulated by opposing influences, the medium was quickly worn out. The “machine,” as referred to by her spirit guides, deteriorates. Then the manifestations become confused.

The spirit of Stainton Moses, author of the book *Spirit Teachings* (London, 1898) who had recently returned to the spiritual plane, was evoked, and soon a controversy arose over a doctrinal point. The English writer had asserted in

his book that backward spirits retained their passions and their earthly appetites in the Hereafter, where they still attempted to satisfy them. This theory was displeasing to Professor Newbold, who asked Stainton Moses's spirit to recant. The latter immediately acquiesced, and its explanations were pitiful. Some writers, in commenting on this episode, thought that deductions unfavorable to the Spiritist philosophy could be drawn from it. The conditions in which Stainton Moses's spirit had spoken seem suspicious to me. The medium did not work well, the spirit could not establish its command over her, let alone prove its identity. Perhaps there was not enough affinity between its fluidic organism and that of Mrs. Piper. Such difficulty has not been taken sufficiently into account by most critics. Besides, for being very opinionated, Prof. Newbold must have exerted a suggestive influence over the medium.

Moreover, thousands of facts exist that demonstrate the inanity of this all too convenient counter-theory purporting that death would suffice to rid us of our vices. Actually, spirits remain the same as what they were and made of themselves during their last incarnation. Bodily needs come from the body and are extinguished with it, whereas desires and passions belong to the spirit and follow it. Almost all the phenomena of haunted houses are caused by backward spirits coming after life to satisfy grudges born on Earth out of bad relationships or harm caused by certain families, which have thus given rise to pernicious influences. It is the same in all cases of spirit obsession and certain types of madness. All long-standing experimenters are aware of this. Lust and avarice subsist among lower-order souls. Phenomena produced by so-called "incubus and succubus"[235] spirits are not imaginary and are established by formal testimonies. It is easy to deny them; it would be better to detect and heal them.

The fleeting manifestation of Stainton Moses's spirit and the discussion of his Spirit Teachings inspired the experimenters to evoke the spirits which had dictated it, the higher order spirits designated in that book under the assumed names of Imperator, Rector, Doctor, and Prudens. This latter responded to the evocation, and soon the character of the sittings changed. It was felt that a new and coordinated action was exerted under the guidance of a higher intellect. Inconsistencies ceased, obscurities and errors vanished; explanations became clear, and evidence abundant. The experimenters' last

doubts disappeared. The medium became the object of assiduous fluidic care. The “machine,” so to speak, was repaired and now functioned with precision. Rector was especially in charge of guarding her and removing any intruders, lax and careless spirits. All communicating spirits had to submit to Rector’s control. This spirit became responsible for transmitting any relevant communications, the answers to questions being asked. Imperator always began with a prayer. When it spoke through the mouth of Mrs. Piper, its voice was grave and imposing, impressive and moving. Its vibrations induced inner retreat and restored harmony in the consulters’ thoughts.

This actually confirms what I have noticed countless times during my long experience as an experimenter. When one approaches the study of phenomena as an amateur, without any concern for the psychical conditions to be fulfilled, one rarely obtains clear and satisfactory results. In the seances directed by me using a stringent method, whenever there was a lapse in the sitters’ close communion and lofty thoughts, and no sooner the state of inner retreat was interrupted by untimely comments or discussions, than the manifestations promptly lost their value and intensity. Lower order spirits crept among us, and under their influence the mediums’ faculties were disturbed, producing only very imperfect results. Then it was necessary to strongly endeavor to compose ourselves and to request for the intervention of invisible powers to restore the regular course of manifestations.

In Spiritist experimentation, one should never forget that results are dependent on obtaining spiritual protection and, especially, on the extent and effectiveness of such hidden protection. The latter will only be as effective as we make it, however, provided we put ourselves in a mental and moral state of psychical harmony that will facilitate the action of elevated spirits. Without mutual affinity in thoughts and feelings, and without communion among themselves, souls can only manage to communicate accidentally and confusedly.

Such is the supreme law and supreme science of spirit manifestations! What is the point of the criticisms proposed by fantasy theorists when confronted with the lesson taught by the facts? Those who see only another science similar to other sciences in Spiritism will inevitably acknowledge the insufficiency of their own conceptions when, in passing from theory into

practice, they see the failure of their efforts, or at least the poor quality of results thus obtained.

Another distinguished investigator, as sagacious as he was scrupulous, and whose testimony I cannot pass over in silence, was Professor Hyslop, from Columbia University, New York. This scientist carried out an in-depth investigation of Mrs. Piper's mediumship, through which phenomena were obtained that cannot be explained either by telepathy or by mind-reading.[236]

The professor asked two hundred questions to his deceased father's spirit, through Dr. Hodgson. While the latter was talking, Prof. Hyslop, hidden under a mask and placed behind the medium, did not utter a single word. In these circumstances, Mrs. Piper could not possibly read in the inquirer's mind the answers which she did not know, for the professor had taken care to choose subjects of an intimate nature, which were unknown to all.

After a long and laborious research, it was possible to ascertain that, of the 205 answers obtained, 152 were perfectly accurate and 16 inaccurate; 37 remained doubtful because they could not be verified. Thorough checking required many trips throughout the United States, with the aim of reconstructing certain details of the Hyslop family history, to which these questions were related.

All those answers were remarkable for their clarity and precision. The personalities of the communicating spirits, with their ideas, their peculiar and characteristic expressions, were rendered with so much fidelity as to inevitably lead observers to conclude that they were genuine. Professor Hyslop, having lost all suspicion of the phenomena at this stage, conversed with his discarnate father through the organs of the entranced Mrs. Piper, under Spirit Rector's control, "With as much ease as if I were talking with him living, through the telephone ... as in an ordinary conversation."[237]

Prof. Hyslop, in lively and incessant conversations, was able to talk to several of his deceased uncles and cousins; with his brother Charles,[238] who had died at the age of four; sisters Anna and Eliza; and obtained satisfactory answers from all of them, which were so numerous that they filled hundreds of pages of his report, partly published in the April 1900 issue of *Harper's Magazine* (USA), and then in the *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XVI (London,

1901). They contain a considerable number of small facts, forgotten incidents of the professor's family life that, after examination, were found to be true. It sometimes took weeks of research to verify them, to see if there was some distant relative that could attest their reality. The results were almost always in conformity with what the spirits had said. With regard to the evidence gathered by the Professor, it can be summarized as follows:[239]

"For an extraneous reader, the report of a sitting cannot create the conviction that stems from a deceased relative or friend who, after a very long time, regains the habits of language, the turns of phrase, the peculiar expressions, and the styles of discussion once so very familiar, which most definitely characterized them when they still lived among us."

Then there were new characters, unknown and profoundly original. For example:

"In what part of her subconscious mind could Mrs. Piper possibly have found these characters named Imperator, Rector and G. Pelham, among others, each having their own modes of intervention, so exact and appropriate to each incident, and never getting mixed up? At every moment, Imperator shows its dignified character and its strong compelling tendencies which justify so well that pseudonym, whereas Rector guides the dialogues and Pelham resolves doubts and rectify mistakes about the facts and, especially, about individuals and their relations with the consulters."[240]

According to Prof. Hyslop, telepathy cannot account for these revelations either. The mistakes themselves, in his opinion, contribute to excluding the possibility of such hypothesis, since several times the spirits were mistaken on certain points which he, Dr. Hyslop, knew perfectly well, and thus could have been easily retrievable by the medium, if she had probed his mind.

At the conclusion of his lecture, "A gentleman in the audience arose and asked Prof. Hyslop if his experience with Mrs. Piper had resulted in his acceptance of Spiritism. Prof. Hyslop replied: 'It positively has done so; there is no other explanation but Spiritism.'"[241]

The history of new Spiritualism is filled with numerous examples of mediums enjoying extraordinary faculties and expressing themselves with compelling eloquence while entranced.

Cora L. Y. Richmond (then Mrs. Tappan) traveled through the United States and the United Kingdom, making marvelous speeches in verse and prose at every town. She also answered all kinds of questions, showing astonishing erudition, “Of which she made no boast and to which she laid no claim, but to the action through her instrumentality of a band of guides who were ready to speak through her whenever their services were in demand.”[242]

In his discourses, T. G. Forster, a Louisiana scholar, was no less impressive. In despair, after having lost three children and the woman he adored, he had come to carry upon his person, “The fatal vial which was to put an end to his misery and put his pains to sleep”.[243]

“I went to hear Mr. TG Forster. I came in ... to laugh and mock, but remained there to listen and astonish myself; and I went out moved and shaken, and came back again. That man spoke with an eloquence of which nothing had hitherto given me any idea. I have heard some celebrated orators ... I have read Cicero, Chatham, Pitt, among others – none of them came even close to approaching the irrefutable eloquence of that sleeping man. Orators of the pulpit and the tribune must necessarily fill in the gap between two ideas with words. It was not so with him: ideas, facts, and dates succeeded one another without the slightest hesitation, the history of [all civilizations was known to him] ... all sciences were familiar to him, as if he had devoted the entire length of a lifetime to study of each of them; and his language, at once simple and elevated, was on a par with his science. When he had returned to his normal state, I found him to be a well-educated man, but not – in fact far from it – the universal man of his speeches. He entered in a trace at my request, and I could talk through him with Professor Drayton (his spirit control). I was convinced. I am now another man; I am joyous, oh, so very happy!”

In the following case that took place in France, the identity of the communicating spirit was unquestionably established. This is a direct quote from the original written minutes which are in my possession:

“On the January 13, 1899, twelve persons had met at Mr. David’s, located at the Place des Corps-Saints, in Avignon (France), for their weekly Spiritualist seance.”

“After a moment of reflection, the entranced medium Mrs. Gallas was seen turning to talk to the ecclesiastic Father Grimaud, speaking to him in the sign language used by certain speech-impaired, profoundly deaf individuals.

The spirit's gesturing skills were such that it was asked to communicate more slowly, which it promptly did. By a precautionary measure which proved to be commendably unobtrusive, Mr. Grimaud merely uttered the letters as they were transmitted by the medium. Since each isolated letter meant nothing, it was impossible, even if one had so wished, to interpret the spirit's message, which was disclosed only at the end of the communication, when it was read by one of the two group members who were in charge of transcribing the alphabetic characters."

"Moreover, the medium employed a double method, which consists in enunciating all the letters of a word, to indicate its spelling, a form only sensible to the observer's eyes, and another technique which expresses articulated words without taking into account their written form, a method once devised by Friar Fourcade, and which was in use exclusively at the Institution for the Speech-impaired and Profoundly Deaf of Avignon. These details are provided by Father Grimaud, director and founder of that establishment."

"The communication concerning the highly philanthropic work to which Father Grimaud has been devoted was signed: Friar Fourcade, deceased in Caen. *None of the participants, with the exception of the venerable Father, ever knew or could possibly have known the author of this communication – although he had spent some time in Avignon some thirty years earlier – or his method*."

It was signed by the group members present at the sitting; Mr. Toursier, retired director of the Banque de France; Mr. Roussel, music leader with the 58th Infantry; Mr. Domenach, lieutenant of the 58th Infantry; Mr. David, a businessman; Misters Brémond and Canuel; Mmes. Toursier, Roussel, David, and Brémond.

The following certificate was then attached to the written minutes:

"I, the undersigned, Grimaud, priest, founding director of the Institution for the Speech-impaired and Profoundly Deaf and Children with Learning Disabilities of Avignon, hereby certify that all of the above is true and absolutely correct. I really must state that I was far from expecting such a communication, whose importance I fully recognize from the point of view of the reality of Spiritism, of which I am a fervent adept, and have no difficulty in thus publicly declaring."

Avignon, April 17, 1899.

Signed: Grimaud, priest.

From 1893 to 1901, we had three ladies, trance mediums, all three belonging to the middle class, whose assistance was wholly disinterested.

Several volumes of stenographic reports made it possible to compare the discourses pronounced, the communications obtained with the aid of their mediumistic faculties; and to observe, at several years' distance, a perfect identity of character and views from each of the communicating spirits.

As soon as the room was darkened, the mediums felt the magnetic influence of the Unseen. In the initial phase of the trance, as they were still awake, they could see a whole circle of spirits forming behind the experimenters; they described the apparitions; they heard and transmitted their indications, the demands made by these spirits, and through their language and certain peculiarities of their physiognomy, or their attitude, group members could easily recognize their departed relatives and friends.

Soon the trance was accentuated, the mediums fell asleep, "incorporations" (psychophonies) occurred. In our group, the fluidic power of the spirits proved sufficient to eliminate the personalities of the subjects and thus avoid any intervention by their subconscious. At most, a mixture of personalities has sometimes been detected in one of the sensitives, when the trance was not deep enough.

Almost always, "incorporations" (psychophonies) succeeded one another. When the taking of possession was complete, room lighting was restored. Then, as soon as the spirit had left, it was dimmed again, so as to facilitate fluidic action by the Unseen and the entrance of a new spirit occupant. Each medium usually served as the transmitting organ for three different spirits in the same seance. While one of the mediums received a spiritual incorporation, the others rested; yet sometimes "incorporations" occurred simultaneously. Dialogues and discussions then took place between several spirits and the president of the mediumistic group. These talks among four individuals, three of whom belonging to the spirit world, were indeed most impressive.

In general, first and foremost, it was the Spirit Guides that manifested

themselves, offering advice and instructions full of logic and grandeur on the problems of life and destiny. Then came conversations with lesser spirits, many of whom had lived among us and shared our work. Emotional scenes occurred. Either parent would come to exhort their children present at the sitting. Friends from beyond the grave revived our childhood memories, services rendered, wrongs committed. They revealed their living conditions on the spiritual plane, spoke of the joys and moral suffering felt after death, as inevitable consequences of their way of life on Earth. Being lively lessons about facts and things, full of movement and color, these effusions and confessions moved us deeply.

Several times, discussions of a certain vehemence arose between the spirits. Through the mouths of our mediums, two celebrated deceased politicians, declared adversaries on Earth, continued to fight with oratorical fervor and a tight dialectic the arguments of the tribune and the pretorium[244] forming a set of characteristic and sharp personality traits, which also served as proof of identity. A struggle of wills between one of our spirit guides and an obsessor, both incorporated, reached epic heights. These scenes, whose intensity and liveliness of expression were such as cannot be seen on any theatrical stage, have left an indescribable impression on our memory.

There were two spirits which took over the direction of the group and manifested themselves at each sitting. They were called the “Blue Spirit”[245] and Jérôme, respectively. The Blue Spirit is a very highly evolved “female” entity. When it animated the organism of the medium, a timid person of modest knowledge, her facial features took on a seraphic expression, the voice softened and became melodious; the language used was poetic and very pure in form. She addressed every participant in turn, with advice, warnings concerning their private conduct, which attested, even at the first interview, to a perfect knowledge of the character and intimate life of each of those being addressed.

Quite often, people totally unknown to the medium, who came to our sittings for the first time, were given counseling, encouragement or received reproaches appropriate to their moral condition and their most secret thoughts. Such advice, while obscure to the other listeners, was always clear and precise to the interested parties. And it was not one of the least attractions of these manifestations by the Blue spirit, that its art of speaking of all intimate and hidden subjects, while avoiding any indiscretion, still remained

perfectly clear to all persons concerned.

The solicitude and the protection offered by the Blue spirit were extended to all the members of the group, and they surfaced many times in the realm of facts. Many of us, struggling with serious difficulties, were able to overcome them thanks to the providential action of this spirit, which, in the most delicate cases and at the most opportune moment, knew how to bring about relief, an unexpected intervention. Its instructions generally related to the family and educating children. The journal *La Tribune Psychique* (Paris, March 1900) reproduced one of these communications, which summarizes in lofty terms the method of our spirit guide. The Blue spirit sees in a profound educational reform of childhood and youth the true remedy for today's vices and for the dangers that threaten modern society.

Jérôme communicates itself through the same medium; but there is a striking contrast between the two spirits. Jérôme, who was an apostle and martyr, remained an orator and combative; its speech is vibrant, its gestures broad and dominating. It expresses itself in chosen words and phrases. Its energy is such that it rapidly drains the medium's resources, therefore it cannot always finish its discourses because of a lack of fluidic force. It especially directs the philosophical studies in our group. Numerous existences, spent in the silence of cloisters and the dust of libraries, have built up treasures of knowledge in him and strengthened his thought. Centuries have seen this spirit plunged in research, study and meditation. The clearer views, the impressions of life on the spiritual plane, have complemented his already extensive scientific wisdom. So what breadth we found in its judgments, what skill in dissipating contradictions, in clearly and soberly summarizing the highest laws of the universe and life! And all this through the mouth of a poor medium of timid gait and elementary instruction!

Now I will examine, in connection with these phenomena, the usual objections made to them, namely, that they are products of the medium's subconscious,[246] second personalities supposedly created by a momentary division of normal consciousness, as claimed by Misters Pierre Janet and Flournoy.

This theory cannot withstand careful examination of the facts. It is precisely in incorporation phenomena that the identity of spirits is most clearly revealed; when the trance is deep and the taking possession of the medium is complete. By its attitudes, gestures, and words, the spirit shows

itself as it was on Earth. Those who knew it during its human existence will find it in its entirety; its individuality restored in familiar phrases and a thousand psychological details that escape analysis.

The same applies to individuals who lived in distant epochs. In our group, the Spirit Guides communicated by the organs of the most modest and humble medium. Another lady, stylish and elegant, served as medium for rather lower-order spirits. The spirit of a fruit and vegetables street vendor could be heard through her mouth, using the dialect of a region where that lady had never set foot in her life. The spirit of an old woman indulged in idle verbiage, or told us pleasant anecdotes. After that, there was the spirit of a sacristan of trailing speech, or still that of a former prosecutor, telling some harsh truths in an imperative tone to the husband of the medium through whom it spoke.

The character of each of these spirits and many others [247]was maintained throughout and constantly affirmed in its originality, during a period of seven years. All our written minutes show this. At the same time, we could follow the gradual progress of one of the spirits, Sophie, the street vendor, which, thanks to its goodwill and the protection of our Spirit Guides, was able to learn and improve itself, until the time of reincarnation arrived. Its return to earthly life was announced in advance, and we were able to follow the painful phases of reincarnation. Having accomplished this process, Sophie did not reappear in our sittings.

If these were indeed second personalities of the medium, how can anyone explain the fact that they were so numerous and that they took on such diverse aspects and names? In our group, communicating spirits were counted by the dozens. In each seance we had six to eight manifestations, of which two or three came through each medium. For each of them, the medium’s physiognomy changed, features, expression changed. By its accent, language and bearing, the invisible personality was established even before being named. These spirits did not all manifest themselves in a continuous manner. Some would reappear only after long absences, but always with the same originality of character, with the same intense reality of individual life and action.

How can one ascribe to the subconscious or dual personality, this variety of characters which, from the sacristan to the Blue spirit, represent all different stages of the hierarchical gradation of the unseen world: from brute

to angel, all forms from the lowly and the mediocre up to the elevated; with power, wisdom, goodness and profound knowledge of things, on the one hand, and weakness, ignorance, rudeness and moral misery, on the other?

These beings have, toward each other, such an attitude as will suit their ranks. For example, they all show a marked deference to the Spirit Guides and talk about them respectfully. Also, it was always in a deeply felt, supplicating tone that the spirit Sophie entreated the protection of the "Blue lady."

These are not imaginary characters, vague phantoms of the subconscious. These spirits live and act like humans. Their opinions and views differ. Sometimes they are sharply opposed. Lively and passionate discussions break out among them, dramatic incidents arise, and a thousand proofs of identity, which dissipate the most tenacious doubts and force conviction upon every mind, come into play. If a supposed second personality can give rise to such contrasts and animate such varied creations, it must be admitted that it surpasses in talent and genius the most dazzling conceptions of normal thought. It produces masterpieces at will and without effort; it is the most miraculous explanation that could be given for such phenomena; it would have to confine itself to the supernatural. And it would be necessary for our opponents to be really hard pressed to resort to a theory so contrary to the demands of sound examination and rigorous science, to a hypothesis as fantastic as it is unlikely, whereas the Spiritist explanation accounts for these facts by natural, simple and clear laws.

Now, let us study more closely this theory of the subconscious of which we have spoken incidentally several times, and through which certain psychologists believe that all phenomena of trance and incorporation can be explained.

Misters Pierre Janet,[248] Alfred Binet, Taine, Ribot, Flournoy, all admit that a split occurs in the consciousness of the sleeping subjects, and that a second personality, unknown to the normal being, therein results, to which all the phenomena are related. They have given it the most diverse names: unconscious, subconscious, subliminal consciousness, second personality, and so on. This hypothesis would serve to explain most of the anomalies

observed in persons afflicted with hysteria, in cases of suggestion, as well as in the various aspects of somnambulism and all variations of personality. According to them, the unity of the conscious self would be an illusion. The latter would be liable to disintegration in certain pathological cases, and distinct, unconscious personalities, consequently ignoring each other, could arise during sleep, and manifest themselves unbeknown to one another. This would explain Spiritist phenomena. The mediums are only hysterics, neurotics, who are particularly predisposed by their physiological condition to these splits in their personality.[249]

First of all, as pointed out by Dr. Geley, hysteria and neurosis do not explain anything.[250] On the other hand, mediums are not hysterics. Dr. Hodgson and Mr. Myers testify that both Mrs. Piper and Mr. Thompson enjoyed perfect health. Professor Flournoy says the same about Hélène Smith. No trace of hysteria was detected in any of these three famous mediums. On the contrary, at their slightest indisposition, the phenomena became weaker or ceased to occur. I can make the same statement with regard to the trance mediums who have long been part of our group. On this subject, the comparisons that our opponents seek to establish are erroneous and their arguments completely flawed. The artificial personalities, that they induce by means of post-hypnotic suggestions in hysterical persons, bear only a vague resemblance to the manifestations of spirit personalities in the mediumistic trance. They are but pastiches, pale and distant imitations.

During trance, the psychical being, the soul, is revealed by an activity distinct from organic functioning, by a particular acuity of one’s faculties. When exteriorization is complete, the medium’s mind can act upon the sleeping body more effectively than during wakefulness, and in the same way as an outside spirit. The brain is no longer an instrument run directly by the soul, as in the waking state, but a receiver which is actuated from without.

This fact has been observed numerous times. For instance, Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, engineer-in-chief of the Post Office Telegraphs of Great Britain, in his deposition at the inquiry opened by the London Dialectical Society, regarding his wife, who was a medium, reported the following phenomenon: [251]

“On one occasion she told me whilst in a trance, ‘ It is not the spirits that now speak, it is myself ; I make use of my body the same as spirits do when they speak through me.’”

Myers, in his introduction to the Report of the Psychological Congress in Paris, 1900,[252] made the following statement about Ms. Thompson's trances:

"The most frequent mode of communication is by *speech in trance*; intermingled with occasional writing, and claiming to come from some definite spirit who 'controls' ... If the control be an unfamiliar one, there may be a few deep inspirations."

An obvious thing to any attentive psychologist is that we humans know so little. In us there are depths full of mystery, which sometimes open up and whose sight disturbs us. A whole world lies therein, a world of intuitions, aspirations and sensations, the origin of which is unknown to us, and which seems come from an earlier past, a mixture of personal acquisitions, psychical heredities and ethnic atavisms, vestiges of the lives experienced in the succession of ages – all these engraved in the hidden recesses of the self.

Consciousness, in normal state, is narrow. In the state of release, it is vast and deep. But there are not two consciousnesses, nor are there two beings within us. It is always one and the same being, the same personality, seen under two different aspects.

The permanence and oneness of the conscious self are demonstrated by a well-known fact: while our physical body is constantly regenerated, our consciousness and memory persist in us through the fluctuations of matter. It is true that normal consciousness does not preserve all the impressions collected by the senses. Many sensations and knowledge are apparently forgotten, when in reality, they all remain recorded in deep consciousness. They may resurface by an intellectual effort, under the influence of an emotion, or in sleep; and in general in all states that can rouse up our dormant faculties.

In a state of full exteriorization (OBE), this awakening is complete. The spirit recover its knowledge with the fullness of its latent faculties, its memories, an enhanced freedom and power of action. It reaches its maximum vibrational level and can reconstitute its past.

Therefore there are two orders of phenomena in a trance, and we must distinguish them carefully. First, there is the intervention of the deceased; then, other cases where the medium, under the magnetic influence of his or her spirit guide, is reconstituted in one of his or her previous existences.

In the case of Hélène Smith, whom Mr. Flournoy, a professor of psychology at the University of Geneva, studied for four years, the entranced

medium reproduced scenes of one of her lives, lived in India in the twelfth century. In this state, she frequently used Sanskrit words, a language she does not know in her normal state. She gave precise indications concerning historical personages of India, which cannot be found in any ordinary book, and of which the Professor, after much research, was able to find confirmation in a book signed by Jean Lacroix de Marlès, an obscure historian completely outside the medium's scope. The latter, in these phases of trance, presented an impressive and seductive stance. In the words of Prof. Flournoy:[253]

"There is in the whole being ... – in the expression of her countenance (Hélène almost always has her large eyes open in this somnambulism), in her movements, in the quality of her voice when she speaks or chants Hindu – a languishing grace, an abandon, a melancholy sweetness, a something of languor and of charm, which corresponds wonderfully with the character of the Orient ... All this so varied mimicry and Oriental speech have such a stamp of originality, of ease, of naturalness, that one asks in amazement whence it comes to this little daughter of Lake Leman [Geneva, Switzerland], without artistic education or special knowledge of the Orient — a perfection of play to which the best actress, without doubt, could only attain at the price of prolonged studies or a sojourn on the banks of the Ganges."

Concerning Hindu writing and language, Flournoy adds that, in his research to explain them, all the trails which he thought he had discovered had "proved false," and he begs the reader to forgive him "for not going into the details" of his failures. But all these experiences, he says, lead him to "frolic," so to speak. In the end, he concludes by rejecting the theory of spirits, so as to see in Spiritist phenomena a mere creation of "subliminal" memory, fantasy or imagination.

It should be noted that Mr. Flournoy's conclusions [254] are in contradiction with the facts observed. When entranced, Miss Smith often saw her spirit guide Leopold at her side; she could hear Leopold's voice. This spirit had its own will and acted as it pleased; often there was a struggle of wills between them. Miss Smith argued; she resisted her being taken possession of, when, regardless of her efforts, the latter was completely accomplished. Then her whole person was transformed; her voice changed – it became the grave and slow voice of a man who had an Italian accent. Her appearance became "grandiose." When Leopold seized Hélène Smith's hand to make it write, the

handwriting was quite distinct and the spelling belonged to the eighteenth century, the epoch that spirit lived on Earth.

Moreover, Leopold “lavishes upon her in turn material or moral advice, useful information, or the encouragement and consolation of which she has need.”[255]

Let us take an example. In one sitting, the spirit Leopold raised the medium with the cushion that supported her, without the help of any of the sitters. This is a perfectly characterized phenomenon of levitation which cannot be ascribed to the so-called “subliminal,” since it requires the intervention of a force and an external agent.

Of course, not everything is as easy to explain in the phenomena of which Miss Smith was the focal point. In her case, it must be acknowledged that difficulties abound, and various different factors seem to intervene. There is an entanglement of Spiritist and animistic phenomena, products of the subconscious mixed with interventions of external and superhuman intelligences which singularly complicate the problem. Yet, from this somewhat confused melange, proofs of identity stand out clearly, well-defined and precise. That is, for example, the manifestation of John the quarryman, whose personality was revealed by convincing details. Also those of the cure Burnier and Jean Chaumontet, syndic of Chessenaz (France), who had been deceased for half a century, and whose handwriting and signatures the medium had automatically reproduced, as recognized and confirmed after an investigation, as being identical with those found in many birth, marriage and death certificates composing the archives of the Commune of Chessenaz, where Miss Smith had never ever been.

I am inclined to believe that, as far this medium is concerned, psychical forces were often insufficient and the phases of her trance very unequal, resulting in frequent awakenings of her own personality. But it does not follow that the phenomena observed can be explained, as Prof. Flournoy would like, by an interplay of the faculties of memory together with the imagination’s subconscious power.

In addition, in his self-confessed tendency to “frolic,” the Professor had more than once attracted derisive spirits to those sittings in which, as he recalls, the latter were “laughing ... and mocking.” The presence of deceiving spirits are to be feared in such cases. And here lies the utility of the rules which I have indicated earlier: the communion and elevation of thoughts

among the sitters facilitating the action of external agents. To laugh, to frolic, to interrupt at all times, to interrogate without rhyme or reason, all these constitute poor conditions for serious experiments.

Hélène Smith is not an isolated case. For several times, a medium in our group had reproduced during trance scenes from his past life, under the influence of his spirit control.

When aided by the hidden action of Spirit Guides, a magnetizer is also able to induce such phenomena in certain sensitives.

Mr. Fernandez Colavida, president of the Spiritist group Fe (Faith) of Barcelona, achieved results that I think should be highlighted here. The following is extracted from the report presented by the Spanish delegation at the Spiritist Congress of 1900: [256]

"The medium being magnetized to the highest degree, [F. Colavida] then commanded him to say what he had done the night before, a week before, a month, a year and, leading him this way, made him go back to his childhood, which he described in all its details."

"Always being led this way, the medium recounted his life on the spiritual plane: his death in his last incarnation, and, being continually led thus, he arrived back at four incarnations of which the oldest was as a veritable savage. It must be remarked that at each existence the facial features of the medium were altogether altered. To bring him back to his usual state, [F. Colavida] first made him come back to his current existence, and then woke him up."

For the sake of control (verification), the experimenter then requested another person to magnetize the same medium, suggesting that his earlier accounts were false. And yet, despite this suggestion, the medium reproduced the series of four existences the same way as he had done before.

Mr. J. Esteva Marata, president of the Spiritist Union of Catalonia (Spain), affirms that he obtained similar results by employing the same means when experimenting with his entranced wife.

Since then, experiments of the same kind have multiplied, and many elements of certainty have thus been obtained regarding previous lives of the soul.[257] However, they require great caution: The experimenter must choose very responsive and well-developed sensitives. Also the experimenter must be assisted by a sufficiently powerful Spirit Guide that can eliminate all extraneous influences and causes of trouble, while at the same time

safeguarding the medium from any possible mishaps.

Summing up, the theory of the subconscious is true, in the sense that our full consciousness is more extensive than our normal consciousness. The subconscious emerges from it in somnambulistic states, takes control over it and overruns it, without ever separating from it.

However, the theory of the subconscious is false if we consider it as a second autonomous consciousness, that is, a dual personality. There are not two beings in us which coexist unaware of each other. One's personality, one's consciousness is just one being. It just so happens to manifest itself under two different aspects, namely, sometimes during one's material life, within the constricted limits of the physical body, with circumscribed memory and faculties; sometimes during psychical life, in the fullness of one's intellectual resources and extended memory. In this case, it embraces all phases of one's past and is able retrieve them.

All the theories proposed by Misters Pierre Janet, Binet, Taine and Ribot, among others, rest on mere appearances. The *self* does not split. On the contrary, the extraordinary faculties revealed during trance converge toward a oneness which is all the more powerful as one's exteriorization (OBE) is more complete.

Unfortunately, the situation is not always clear, nor is the disengagement from the body (OBE) sufficient. Sometimes there is a sort of overlapping, a vibrational ebb and flow between the acting causes, which make the phenomenon obscure and confused. This is especially the case when various invisible personalities manifest themselves during the trance, and none of them has the strength or willpower to eliminate the causes of error.

The causes in action may be confounded during partial, incomplete somnambulistic states. But it remains a higher state in which the spirit reveals itself in its living power, in its inner penetration of things. At those times we can witness truly lofty phenomena. However, in order to obtain them, it is necessary to proceed in a more serious manner than these "laughing and frolicking" psychologists have done.

Manifestations of a more serious order were given by the spirits George

Pelham, Robert Hyslop and above all by Imperator, Jérôme, and the Blue spirit. In them, character traits and proofs of identity abound, leaving no place for doubt. The same is true of cases in which numerous personalities, presenting a great variety of characters and opinions, consistently and accurately succeed one another in the body of a medium; and from that same mouth, we are allowed to hear now the most trivial language, now the most pure and chosen one, expressing noble and delicate sentiments, and views so profound that they delight all hearers.

Manifestations of distressed spirits, coming to the seances guided by compassionate ones, to disclose their sorrows, their regrets and their sufferings, seeking consolation and enlightened counseling, are not subliminal impostures either.

In that regard, I have often observed the following fact: The fluidic influence of lower order spirits makes mediums uncomfortable, causing discomfort during trance and violent migraines upon awakening, to the point of requiring immediate disengaging by means of magnetic passes. Conversely, when engaging elevated entities such as the Blue spirit, for example, the same sensitives undergo a gentle trance whose influence is salutary and beneficial, and the medium awakes with an impression of serenity, as if bathed in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

Theories of the subconscious and dual personality are impotent to explain such phenomena. The subconscious is simply a state of memory, whose deep layers, silent in normal life, awaken and vibrate during exteriorization (OBE). This is demonstrated by cases of reconstruction of previous lives in mediums. This remains a magnificent field of study for us to achieve the knowledge about the human being and the laws of its evolution. Here we find evidence that the conscious self is not a spontaneous creation, but that it has constituted its individuality through successive acquisitions, in a whole series of existences. Since the current physical organism has not contributed to some of these acquisitions, it is evident that the mind cannot be regarded as the result of such organism, but that instead it existed before it, and will survive it.

Therefore, in all its strength and logic, the Spiritist theory emerges from a set of phenomena which it alone can explain. The soul reveals itself as independent of the body, with its indivisible personality, whose self is slowly formed throughout the ages, with the aid of materials which it retains in latent

state within itself, and of which it retrieves possession when in out-of-body state, during sleep, trance, or by the time of death.

XX

Spirit apparitions and Materializations

Apparitions and materialization phenomena are those which most impress experimenters. In the manifestations that we have previously discussed, the spirit acts by means of material objects or extraneous organisms. Now instead we will see it directly at work. Fully aware that, among the proofs of survival after death, there is none more powerful than its reappearance in human form – that of its former earthly life – a spirit will work to reconstitute its form by means of fluidic elements and the vital force borrowed from the sitters.

In certain seances, when in presence of mediums endowed with considerable psychical force, spirits' hands, faces, torsos, and even whole bodies may be formed, having all the appearances of life: warmth, movement, tangibility. These hands can touch, caress or strike you; they move objects and play musical instruments. These faces come alive and speak, their bodies move, circulating among the sitters; you can grab and palpate them. Then they suddenly vanish, passing from the solid state to the fluidic state after an ephemeral duration.

Just as incorporation phenomena introduce us to the profound laws of psychology, so can the reconstitution of spirit forms familiarize us with the lesser known states of matter. By showing us the actions that the will is capable of exercising over imponderables, it brings us closer to the most intimate secrets of creation, or rather, the eternal renewal of the universe.

We know that the universal fluid, or ethereal cosmic fluid,[258] represents the simplest state of matter. It is so subtle that it escapes all analysis. And yet, from this very fluid, through gradual condensations, all solid and heavy bodies proceed, which constitute the foundation of earthly matter. These bodies are not as dense or compact as they appear to be. They are traversed with the greatest ease by fluids, as well as by the spirits themselves. The latter, by focusing their will aided by psychical force, can disintegrate them, dissociate their elements, bring them back to fluidic state, and then move them and reconstitute them back to their former state. This explains apport

phenomena.[259]

Through its successive degrees of rarefaction (etherealization), matter passes from solid to liquid, then to the gaseous phase, ending up in the fluidic state. The hardest bodies can thus return to the unseen and ethereal state. Conversely, the subtlest fluid can be gradually changed into an opaque and tangible body. All nature shows us the chain of transformations which lead matter from the purest ethereal state to the coarsest physical state.

As it etherealizes and becomes increasingly subtler, matter acquires new properties and forces of growing intensity. Explosives, the radiations of certain substances, the penetration power of cathode rays, the long-range action of radio waves, are just some examples. Through them, we are led to consider the cosmic ether as the environment in which matter and energy merge, as a great fulcrum of dynamic activities, source of the inexhaustible forces directed by divine will, and from which the harmonies of life and eternal thought are spread in incessant waves.

There you are! – and at this point the issue at hand takes on an unexpected magnitude – The action exerted by the creative power upon the universal fluid in order to give birth to whole systems of worlds is the same that we find on a more modest level, but subject to identical laws, in the action of a spirit reconstituting its passing forms which can establish, in the eyes of humans, its existence and its identity.

The same nebulae, aggregates of condensed cosmic matter and germs of worlds, which our telescopes reveal in deep space, are to be found in the first phase of the process of spirit materializations.

This is how Spiritist experimentation results in the broadest consequences. The action of the spirit over matter can make us understand how stars develop and unfold the gigantic work of the Cosmos.

In most seances, we can first distinguish ovoid-shaped nebulous clumps; then radiant fluidic trails detaching themselves either from the walls or parquet floors, or from the sitters themselves; which gradually enlarge and extend, becoming spectral forms.

In their variety materializations are graduated to infinity. Spirits condense their forms so as to be perceived at first by seeing mediums. The latter describe the physiognomy of the communicating spirits – and what they describe is later confirmed by photography both in daylight and flashlight.[260] It is known that the photographic plate is more sensitive than the human eye.

When accomplished to a greater degree, materialization is complete; the spirit becomes visible to all sitters and lets itself be weighed. Its limbs can leave imprints and molds in soft substances.

Control should be very rigorous for all that. One must be careful to guard against all causes of error or delusion. This is why registering and photographic devices should be used as often as possible.

First let us take a look at all the cases in which images of spirits, invisible to the sitters, could be fixated on photographic plates. While many deceptions and abuses have occurred in this type of phenomena, by contrast, serious experiments and testimonies abound.

English scientist and researcher Alfred Russell Wallace, experimenting at home with his own family, obtained a photograph of his mother's spirit, in which "an unusually projecting lower lip" provided convincing proof of identity. A seeing medium had described the apparition before the end of the photographic session, and the description was proved to be accurate.[261]

The French painter Tissot, famous for the illustrations to his own book *The Life of Our Savior Jesus Christ* (English ed., New York, McClure-Tissot Co., 1899), obtained a no less striking proof: a photograph of a group composed of both the physical and the fluidic bodies of his medium during an out-of-body experience, as well as a disincarnate spirit and the experimenter.[262]

Similar findings were made by Doctors Thompson and Moroni; Professors Boutlerov and Rossi-Pagnoni; and Mr. Beattie, of Bristol. All surrounded themselves with the most minute precautions. In Aksakof's *Animisme et Spiritisme* (p. 27), we can read a detailed account of Mr. Beattie's experiments.

In the first series of these experiments, a human form was formed on the photographic plate at the eighteenth session. Later, Dr. Thompson engaged in these researches, and a series of human heads, profiles, and forms were obtained, vague at first and then more and more distinct to the sight, all of which had been described beforehand by an entranced medium. Sometimes they operated in darkness. This is what Aksakof said about it:[263]

"From all this we may conclude that we are in the presence, not of mere 'luminous apparitions,' but of productions of a certain type of matter, invisible to the eye and luminous by itself, or reflects on the photographic plate the rays of light to whose action our retina is insensible. That this is some sort of matter is proved by the fact, that it is sometimes so little

compact, that the forms of the sitters and the table can be seen through it; and at other times so dense that it covers the image of the sitters ...” In one case, “The form appeared black.”

As we can see, Aksakov believes, with me, that these manifestations cannot be explained without the existence of a fluid or ether, a substance molded by unseen intelligent beings. In his opinion, it is this that lends a dual character to the phenomenon, at once material in the strict sense of the word, and intellectual, by the intervention of a will that artificially shapes this invisible matter for a specific purpose.

William H. Mumler, a professional photographer, obtained images of deceased persons on his plates. He was sued for fraud, yet no fraud was discovered and the photographer won the case.

Not only did the judicial inquiry established as a fact the production on the photographic plate of human figures invisible to the naked eye, but also twelve witnesses declared that they had recognized the images of their deceased relatives in these figures. Furthermore, five witnesses, including Judge John W. Edmonds of New York, testified that although these images were indeed produced and recognized, the persons depicted in them had never been photographed during their lifetime.[264] In Mr. Bronson Murray’s case,[265] images of deceased persons were obtained in the absence of any witnesses who had known them on Earth.

It was possible to photograph the successive phases of a materialization. I have in my possession a series of reproductions which I owe to the kindness of Mr. Ernesto Volpi, director of the periodical *II Vessillo Spiritista* of Rome, and whose integrity is above suspicion. They represent the gradual apparitions of a spirit form, very vague at the first photographic session, then becoming more and more condensed, until finally it becomes visible to the medium, at the same time that it impresses the photographic plate.

Let us now recall some of the cases in which the apparition is visible to all sitters, at the same time as to the medium, which makes any confusion impossible. On these occasions the materialized spirit has all the appearance of a human being; it moves and walks, talks with the people present and, after having lived a few moments in this state, slowly vanishes and melts, so to

speak, before their eyes.

First and foremost, there is the famous case of Katie King, a feminine form which manifested itself for several years in presence of Sir W. Crookes of the Royal Society of London, as already mentioned by me elsewhere.[266]

It has often been suggested that Sir W. Crookes went back on his assertions. Well, let us see what he actually said in his address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science – of which he was president – held in Bristol in 1898:[267]

"Thirty years have passed since I published an account of experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals ... I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto."

The celebrated British author Mrs. Florence Marryat left in one of her books a detailed account of Crookes's seances of which she had been one of the most assiduous witnesses. Here is a fragment: [268]

"I have sat for her several times with Mr. Crookes, and seen the tests applied which are mentioned in his book on the subject. I have seen Florrie's dark curls *nailed down to the floor*, outside the curtain, in view of the audience, whilst 'Katie' walked about and talked with us ... Moreover, I have seen both Florrie and 'Katie' together on several occasions, so I can have no doubt on the subject that they were two separate creatures ... All present ... decided we would prefer to witness the effect of a full glare of gas upon the materialized form than to have the usual sitting ... We accordingly told 'Katie' of our choice, and she consented to stand the test, though she said afterwards we had put her to much pain. She took up her station against the drawing-room wall, with her arms extended as if she were crucified. Then the gas-burners were turned on to their full ... The effect upon 'Katie King' was marvelous. She looked like herself for the space of a second only, then she began gradually to melt away. I can compare the dematerialization of her form to nothing but a wax doll melting before a hot fire. First, the features became blurred and indistinct; they seemed to run into each other. The eyes sunk in the sockets, the nose disappeared, the frontal bone fell in. Next the limbs appeared to give way under her, and she sank lower and lower on the carpet like a crumbling edifice ... and we were left staring by the light of three gas burners at the spot on which 'Katie King' had stood."

We endeavored to reproduce this description here in order to illustrate how great is the disintegration power of light over temporary fluidic creations; hence the need for dark or dimly lit rooms in certain cases, despite the inconveniences they may present.

In this regard, Mr. Camille Flammarion made the following analogy in an article published by the *Revue* (Paris, vol. 65, p. 36) in 1906:

“Here is a mixture of equal volume parts of hydrogen and chlorine in a flask. If you want this mixture to be preserved, you must, whether you like it or not, place the flask in the dark. That is the law. As long as it remains in the shade, it will preserve itself. But, if inspired by some schoolboy fancy, you expose this mixture to the action of light, suddenly a violent explosion will be heard. Hydrogen and chlorine will disappear, and you will end up with a new substance in the flask, namely, hydrochloric acid. By then it will have dawned on you that darkness respects the two bodies, whereas light breaks them.”

Another famous case, bringing together the best elements of certainty and the most conclusive evidence,[269] was the apparition in New York, from 1861 to 1866, of the deceased Estelle Livermore to her husband, the banker Livermore, during 388 seances, led by another spirit who claimed to have been Benjamin Franklin.

The phenomenon is complemented by a series of persistent proofs. About a hundred messages were written by Estelle in front of her husband, on cards brought and marked by him. Thanks to a mysterious light which enveloped the phantom, Mr. Livermore recognized the hand, the features, the eyes, the brow, and the hair of the writer. “The face of Estelle ... in front of the light,” he said, “throwing its fitful gleams upon such beauty as, in beings of this world, it is not given us to witness ... looked at me with an expression radiant with blessedness.” (*Op. cit.*, p. 488)

These facts are already ancient by now and have often been reported. We could not, however, let them pass unremarked upon, in view of their importance and the great repercussion they had. Here are some more recent phenomena. Here, it is not only isolated forms that appeared, but whole groups of materialized spirits, each of which constituting an individuality distinct from the medium. Different shapes, sizes and dimensions appear together, are gradually organized at the expense of a nebulous fluidic mass, and then suddenly dissolve, after having intermingled for a moment in the

works and the discussions of experimenters.

Dr. Paul Gibier, director of the New York Pasteur Institute, presented a very extensive paper on “materializations of phantoms,”[270] to the 4th International Congress of Psychology, held in Paris in the year1900, which were obtained by him in his own laboratory, in the presence of assistants who usually helped him in his biology work. Several ladies of his family also attended these experiments. Their special mission was to supervise the medium, Mrs. Salmon, by checking her clothes, which were always black, whereas the ghosts would appear in white.

All precautions were taken. A metal cage was used, carefully closed by an iron door locked with a padlock. During the seances, the medium was locked in this cage whose key remained in possession of Dr. Gibier at all times. In addition, a French postage stamp was glued to the opening of the padlock. The cage was complemented by a draped cabinet. In other occasions, the cabinet alone was used without the cage.

Many seances were held under such conditions. I will only relate one, because it summarizes all the others.[271]

On December 10, 1898,[272] the medium, Mrs. Salmon, was placed in the cabinet and tied to her chair. In addition, a ribbon was passed around her neck and secured by a surgical knot. The ends of the ribbon were passed through two holes pierced in the ceiling of the cabinet and tied together very tightly by a double knot, far from the reach of the medium, who was clad in black. Although the light was dimmed, the objects remained discernible.

At first, incomplete apparitions of arms, torsos and faces occurred during the sitting. Whole forms succeeded them, all dressed in white. Their sizes varied, from a child’s form, called little Maudy, to phantoms of high stature. Then came the forms of women, thin and graceful despite the fact that the medium herself was a slightly overweight person of fifty years of age. Among the apparitions, there was a large and bearded masculine form. It was Ellan, a strong-voiced spirit who gave out vigorous handshakes to the audience. This hand, when pressed by that of Dr. Gibier, gradually melted under the pressure.

Such apparitions were formed in plain sight of the experimenters. They first distinguished a hazy point shining and moving, which gradually extended in the form of a column. Then it turned into a T-shape which in turn became a veiled woman’s profile. Finally, a charming face of a young girl,

slim and delicate, took shape and condensed. She walked among the assembly, greeting shaking hands with them. After that, the apparition collapsed like a castle of cards. For an instant, one could still see a graceful head emerging above the floor, then everything disappeared. At that same moment, Dr. Gibier touched the medium that was still in her place, bound in the cabinet. Full light was restored, the ribbons were checked and found to be intact; it took considerable time to untie them.

These forms can move and speak. They give their names: Blanche, Lélia, Musiquita, etc. One of them could play the guitar. All talked to the sitters; their voices could be heard from every corner of the room. As for the fabrics that seem to clothe the apparitions, they themselves claim to produce them in part with the aid of elements borrowed from the medium's dematerialized clothes. In one seance, the spirit Lélia formed with its breath, under the eyes of those assembled, a light cloth of white gauze that gradually spread over, covering all the sitters present. This is an example of creation through will which confirms what was said at the beginning of this chapter. Where do these apparitions come from and what is their nature? According to Dr. Gibier, when questioned, all phantoms declared themselves to be "'Spirits' manifested by their instrument (the medium) ... entities, distinct personalities, discarnate spirits, whose mission is to demonstrate to us the existence of the afterlife."[273]

One detail among others shows that all these spirits have a human character. Dr. Gibier declares that these forms are very shy at first, therefore "One has to earn their confidence."[274]

The identity of one of these spirits could be established in a precise manner. That of Blanche, a deceased relative of two ladies attending the sittings. She was a niece of one and a cousin of the other. Both were able to kiss her many times and talk to her spirit in French, a language that the medium could not understand.

Dr. Gibier remarked that the manifestations varied in intensity, according to the "volume of forces" supplied to the spirits by the medium; and were produced, depending on the case, at greater or less distance from the cage or cabinet where the latter was seated.

A troubling event took place in one of the seances. The medium, entranced and locked in the cage, was found outside it at the end of the evening. According to the explanations given by the spirit Ellan, the door of the cage

had been dematerialized and then reconstituted by the invisible agents. This is a remarkable case of disintegration and reconstitution of solid matter which seems important to highlight here.

No less important were the testimonies collected by the International Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress held in Paris in 1900.

In the sitting on September 23, Dr. J. M. Bayol, former governor of Dahomey, senator and president of the General Council of the Bouches-du-Rhône Department (France), explained with clarity the phenomena of apparitions observed from January 1, 1899 to September 6, 1900, on a farm in the Alyscamps necropolis of Arles.[275]

I have since personally visited the Roman necropolis of Alyscamps (literally “Elysian Fields”), where, among yews and terebinths under the clear cloudless sky of Provence, rows of ancient sarcophagi are still lined up. I have seen the grave of Acella, mentioned below, and read the following inscription: “To my daughter Acella, who died at the age of seventeen, on the very night of her wedding.” It was on a neighboring farm, built with tombstones, that Dr. Bayol’s experiments took place, in presence of prominent figures, such as the prefect of Bouches-du-Rhône; a general of division; the great poet Fréderic Mistral, author of *Mireille* (Paris, 1859); medical doctors, lawyers, and so on.

These phenomena began with movements of a heavy table, which rolled in the room with great noise. Then luminous globes were seen to flutter and be reflected in the mirrors, which proved their objective reality. Dr. Bayol had the idea of evoking the spirit of Acella, the female Roman teenager who had died at the time of the Antonine emperors (AD 137–180). A flame appeared, came up to him and landed on his head. He talked to her as he would have done to a living person, and the flame kept moving in an intelligent way. Sometimes there were as many as ten or twelve seemingly intelligent flames; thus the entire room became illuminated.

“Could it be that we were having hallucinations,” Dr. Bayol wondered. “Sometimes there were nineteen of us and I think it would be hard to hallucinate an old colonial administrator like me.”

Later, in Eyguières (Bouches-du-Rhône, France), the spirit of Acella made

itself visible and left an impression of its face in paraffin – not hollow, as casts are usually rendered, but in high relief. Then there were apports,[276] and rains of rose petals, fig leaves and laurel, which filled the narrator's pockets. A poem was dictated in the Provençal language, and melodies were played on a mandolin without apparent contact.

Illiterate individuals who were mediums obtained writing phenomena in classical Greek language. At other times, there were physical effects of great power. One of the mediums was thrown into the void at a height of thirteen feet, and fell back on a table without hurting himself.

"[My] experiments ... ," said Dr. Bayol in his introductory address,[277] "[were] surrounded with all possible precautions ... In France there is this formidable thing, this terrible monster that frightens the French, which is called ridicule. Pray allow an old colonial administrator like me to brave it. I am convinced that I am right and that I should not be afraid of telling the truth."

During the years 1901 and 1902, the Italian press covered a series of seances given by the medium Eusapia Paladino at the Minerva Club in Genoa, in presence of Professors Lombroso, Morseli, F. Porro, and of the witty journalist and writer Luigi Arnaldo Vassallo, director of the newspaper *Il Secolo XIX*, who was well known in the peninsula and very skeptical about Spiritism.

There were ten sittings. After many physical phenomena and several cases of levitation,[278] some apparitions took form. Here is how Mr. Vassallo described them in his newspaper: [279]

"The phenomenon lasted long enough to exclude the possibility of individual or collective hallucination. Above the medium's head there appeared a white hand that saluted all sitters. To develop the phenomenon, the light preventing materialization was turned out. Then, immediately, I felt behind me the unmistakable tactual sensation of contact with a person; two arms surrounded me, embracing me with passionate tenderness; two small, slender hands, proportionate to the hand seen earlier, pressed and caressed my head. A mysterious light dazzled me and I received repeated kisses the sound of which everyone could hear. That could only be my deceased son,

Naldino; and now after we lit up a small electric lamp, a silhouette was drawn beside me, visible to all and rendering with exactitude the features of my deceased boy. This form remained motionless for several seconds."

"The fourth sitting showed us the phenomenon at its most intense. Naldino appeared again. First, a long embrace, during which I felt a human body of about my own height leaning against me. Then I received a multitude of kisses, heard by all, interspersed by broken phrases spoken in the Genoese dialect – note that the medium could only speak Neapolitan – and which had a particular timbre so familiar to me: 'Papà mio! papà caro' ('Daddy, daddy dear') alternated with expressions of joy, such as 'oh Dio!' ('Oh God!')."

"All of a sudden, the contact with the unseen, yet so tangible, seemed to be about to vanish; my son seemed to fade away. Then a new embrace. I was given three strong kisses, almost noisy, and the voice said to me: 'Li darai alla mamma!' (These are for mom'). We were urged to turn the electric lamp on again, and as if the unseen wanted to give us a final proof of its presence, a phenomenon that had happened to Professor Mirelli [280] in a previous seance was renewed. We all perceived a human form, having all resemblance to that already designated, advance towards me, open its arms and embrace me again. One of its hands held my right hand, while my left hand never let go of the medium's, who, as all sitters could see, rested on her chair in a state of calm and profound hypnosis."

In some evenings there were many apparitions. Indistinct profiles, contours of heads, shadows drawn on a dimly lit background; extremely tenuous ,white phantoms appear in the darker corners of the room. Professor Morselli recognized the shadow of his little daughter, who had died at the age of eleven. Mr. Bozzano felt a delicate feminine hand hold and caress him; two arms surrounded his neck. A weak but distinct voice pronounced a name which to him was "a revelation from beyond the grave." Meanwhile the medium, awaken, moaned, imploring her invisible friends, asking for help. Her sufferings were such that the experiments had to be suspended at once.

During a seance directed by Dr. Morselli, a professor of psychology at the University of Genoa, the medium, after having her clothes carefully searched, was tied to a small camp bed. Five materialized forms appeared in the dim light. The last was that of a woman wrapped in transparent gauze and carrying a child in her arms. Another form of a young woman, whose shadow projected by the bright gaslight appeared on the wall, bowed, and the shadow

followed the form's every movement.[281]

A sharp controversy about these experiments broke out among several journals. In one of his replies Professor Morselli stated:[282]

"Spiritualism, bound up, as it is, with the beliefs of the ancients, and associated with all the great religions and philosophies of the world, deserves to engage the attention and respect of the most liberal, as well as of the most prejudiced man of Science. It can no longer be passed over with derision and almost indifference, because it is an hypothesis which commands the assent of intellects of the highest order."

L. A. Vassallo, in a press conference held in Rome at the premises of the local Press Association, in front of an elite audience presided by Mr. Luigi Luzzatti, a financier, jurist and Prime Minister of Italy between 1910 And 1911, exposed all the facts which have just been described above, and boldly asserted the apparitions of his deceased son.

Finally, in his book *After Death – What?*, chapter II, section "Spectral Appearances and Materializations," the famous professor at the University of Turin, Cesare Lombroso, after recounting the apparitions obtained during sittings with Eusapia by Vassallo and Morselli, expressed himself thus:[283]

"I myself had the opportunity of examining a similar apparition in Genoa in 1903. The medium (Eusapia) was in a state of semi-intoxication, so that I should have thought that nothing would be forthcoming for us. On being asked by me, before the seance opened, if she would cause a glass inkstand to move in full light, she replied, in that vulgar speech of hers, 'And what makes you obstinately stuck on such trifles as that? I can do much more: I can cause you to see your mother ...'"

"Prompted by that promise, after half an hour of the seance had passed by, I was seized with a very lively desire to see her promise kept. The table at once assented to my thought by means of its usual sign-movements up and down; and soon after (... in the semi-obscurity of a red light) I saw detach itself from the curtain a rather short figure like that of my mother veiled, which ... came to me, and whispered to me words heard by many, but not by me, who am somewhat hard of hearing. I was almost beside myself with emotion and begged her to repeat her words. She did so, saying, 'Cesar, fio mio!' (... this was not her habitual expression, which was, when she met me, 'mio fiol'; but the mistakes in expression made by the apparitions of the deceased are well known, and how they borrow from the language of the

psychic and of the experimenters), and, removing the veil from her face for a moment, she gave me a kiss."

"At that moment Eusapia was certainly held by the hand by two persons, and her height is at least four inches greater than that of my poor mother, of whose appearance she had not the faintest idea ..."

"One of the most typical and strange instances is that which happened to Massaro, of Palermo, in the seance of November 26, 1906, at Milan. Some time previously, having evoked at a turning-table the spirit of the son recently deceased, he had received from him the promise of a materialization at Milan."

There have been countless spirits' apparitions and materializations. I myself have seen one in Tours (France), which I described in my book *Christianity and Spiritism*.[284] In this case, the form was dark and vague. It did not walk; it slid through the floor.

Sometimes the apparitions took on all the characteristics of an ideal beauty. Mr Georg Larsen, in a letter to the Swedish newspaper *Eko*,[285] describes the appearance of his wife Anna, who had died on March 24, 1899. The phenomenon took place in Berlin in 1901 in presence of Princess Mary Karadja, Countess Eliza von Moltke, and others. Minutes were drawn up and signed by all those present. Mr Larsen narrates:

"The curtains opened, disclosing a wonderful spectacle. We saw a slender woman, dressed like a bride with a long white veil falling from head to foot; but what a veil that was! It seemed woven with luminous airborne rays. How promptly I recognized that face! Twelve years ago, I was leading this woman, then alive, to the altar! Oh, how beautiful she was, with the veil falling from her black hair and a star shining over her head! I heard exclamations of astonishment around me. My eyes remained fixed on that beloved face until the curtains closed again."

"A moment later she reappeared, looking just as she used to be in our home. She came closer to me and held her outstretched arms up. Her black hair formed the most beautiful frame around her face. Her arms were bare, her slender body was draped in a long snow-white dress. She looked at me with her luminous black eyes; I could see her affectionate expression, her

attitude – it was my wife alive again. But the whole apparition exuded an exquisite beauty and harmony, an idealized whole that no human on Earth possesses. I whispered her name. Then I became suffused with a feeling of indescribable happiness. She slid silently back into the closet, whose curtains shut down. The room was well lit; the sitters were calm and serious; the medium remained visible in her chair to one side for the whole duration of the apparition."

At Mr. Larsen's request, a piece of the veil was left behind. It is still in his possession. This veil, he said, is of a delicate fabric woven with the same material that the spirit employed to render itself visible, and which derives its origin from radiations of the human body.

Whenever they criticize apparition phenomena, the detractors of Spiritism often resort to the theory of hallucination. This explanation is, of course, as vague as it is convenient, since it has become a rather empty word intended to conceal the shortage of arguments by its beleaguered opponents.

First of all, it is important to specify what is meant by hallucination. It is, we are told, an error on the part of the senses. Yet the range of our perceptions is so very limited; so many things in nature escape our imperfect senses; that we can never positively know, in contested cases, whether or not they are objects perceived by subtler senses, more refined than those usually found in the majority of humans.

As we have seen, a great number of Spiritist manifestations are based on photographs and moulages,[286] which, by confirming their authenticity, preclude any possibility of error.

Aksakof obtained photographs of the materialized form of a spirit supporting in its arms the medium Eglinton, who was deeply entranced and completely exhausted. All those present could see the apparition: a tall man with black beard and piercing eyes.[287]

In a sitting with Madame d'Espérance at Gothenburg (Sweden) in 1897, numerous spirit photographs were obtained in presence of Mr. A. Aksakof and other experimenters.[288]

These moulages (casting molds) of materialized limbs are obtained in hot paraffin wax. Plaster is then poured into the mold to create a cast faithfully

reproducing in detailed relief all the anatomical traits of the form.

The hands molded by using this process have no relation with those of the mediums. Geologist William Denton obtained moulages of different sizes, ranging from gigantic hands, surpassing the dimensions of human hands, to the fingers of little children. As a method of control, the experiments were made in a locked and sealed box, which was examined beforehand by all those present. The operation took place in full light, the medium being constantly watched, and the verbatim minutes were signed by the experimenters, including Prof. W. Denton, Dr. Gardner, Col. F. A. Cope, and Mr. Epes Sargent (a well-known man of letters in the United States), among others.[289] Identical experiments were made, with the same results, by Mr. Reimers of Manchester. There, the medium's head and hands were enclosed in a bag of tulle buckled to the belt. The hidden agents were visible at the same time as the medium. In one seance, one could simultaneously see the latter and four materialized forms, each having its particular features which distinguished it from the other apparitions. They introduced themselves to the sitters after the casting mold operations, and invited them to remove the paraffin gloves themselves, from their materialized hands or feet.[290]

Any trickery was rendered impossible by the simple fact that, since the paraffin was boiling, no human hand could have withstood such exceedingly high temperature. Moreover, a human hand cannot detach itself from the mold without breaking it, or at least without damaging its delicate and easily crumbled shape, whereas the hidden hand seems to dematerialize in the mold itself.

Professor E. Bozzano published in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* of January 1910 an excerpt of the sittings organized in Norway in 1893 with Madame d'Espérance by a group of major experimenters. These seances took place at the home of a professor, Herr E—. The materialized form of a spirit called "Nepenthes" manifested itself almost every time; it was a female form of great beauty. It appeared in full light at the same time as the medium, "who was awake and sat with the experimenters outside the cabinet." It materialized in the middle of the circle; sometimes Nepenthes let itself be photographed, sometimes it wrote on the notebook of one of the sitters, and sometimes it furnished a casting mold of its own hand by plunging it into melted paraffin wax. This last experiment is thus narrated in the diary of Baroness Anna Peyron:[291]

“The sound of dipping and splashing in water went on for several minutes in the shadow of the curtains (of the cabinet), when we saw the gleaming white figure bending over the vessels. Then it rose and came back into the circle ... ‘Nepenthes’ looked about till she saw Herr E., who was sitting behind another person, and then floated across to him, holding out the something ‘She has given me a lump of wax,’ he said, and then immediately added, ‘No, it is the mold of her hand, she is letting her hand melt out of it.’ ... even while he was speaking, she glided, without a sound, into the shelter of the cabinet, leaving him standing with the mold in his hand ...”

“At last the long desired phenomenon had been obtained! When the sitting was over, the mold was examined. Externally, it appeared to be shapeless, lumpy, made of a great number of superimposed layers of paraffin; but on the inside it showed the imprint of all the fingers of an extremely small hand.”

“Next day it was taken to a worker in plaster of Paris ... who made a cast. He and his workmen looked with astonishment at the mold and remarked that some witchcraft had been at work, as it could not have been formed upon and been withdrawn from a human hand.”

The materialization of fluidic limbs can sometimes be explained as a partial rendering of the medium’s organism. Aksakof obtained a casting mold of the out-of-the-body foot form of medium William Eglinton.[292]

It was also found that the exteriorized hands of medium Eusapia Paladino could leave impressions in soft substances placed at a distance.

Based on these facts, some were led to conclude that the apparitions of phantoms are mere duplications of the medium. This explanation is unacceptable since, as we have seen, in presence of a single medium, up to five or six materialized spirits of different “genders” could be counted, many of which spoke foreign languages completely unknown to the sensitive. Even in cases of isolated apparitions, materialized forms differ entirely from the medium, both physically and intellectually, as shown by the cases mentioned above.

Aksakof was inclined to believe that these forms were not reproductions of the physical appearance that these spirits once had in their earthly existence. To him those were fantasy forms, imagined and created by the invisible agents, which would not enclose themselves in these forms, but rather animate them from without. He claimed that this explanation would be given by the spirits themselves.[293]

But while this theory might be applied to the phenomena which took place in Gothenburg, it does not seem extensible to all cases of materialization; for example, to the phenomena observed by Crookes, Wallace, Gibier, and others. Indeed, if a spirit can create material forms which are mere images, it can also turn its own envelope concrete so as to make it visible. Materialization phenomena can be explained rationally and satisfactorily by the way the perispirit functions. This fluidic envelope of the soul is like a blueprint, a framework on which matter is incorporated and made concrete through a successive build-up of molecules, to the point of reconstituting an entire human organism.

Thus, in the case of "Katie King," the materialized spirit is like an earthly woman. It breathes, its heart beats, it possesses all the physiological characteristics of a living being.[294]

In the paraffin molds obtained by J. K. F. Zöllner and Denton, among others – molds or imprints of hands, feet, and faces – the tiniest details of the skin, bones, and tendons are most faithfully reproduced. In presence of twelve witnesses, Doctors T. L. Nichols and Frieze obtained the casting mold of a child's hand which presented a peculiarity, a slight deformity, which enabled a lady present at the seance to recognize the hand of her daughter, who had died at the age of five.[295]

It should not be inferred from all this that the spirit retains on the spiritual plane the physical imperfections or mutilations of its earthly body. That is an absolutely erroneous assumption, since the unanimous testimony of the discarnate teaches us quite otherwise. In the Hereafter, the perispirit is never crippled or mutilated.

"When a spirit wants to materialize,"[296] says G. Delanne, "it must necessarily put the perispiritual[297] mechanism into action, which in turn reconstitutes the body with all the changes that it had experienced during the spirit's sojourn on Earth." The following account, given to the periodical *Facts* of April 1885 by Mr. James M. N. Sherman, of Rumford (Rhode Island), and reproduced in the British journal *Light* of May 16, 1885 (p. 235), is another example of the law of preservation of the forms evolved by a living being during its passage here below:

"When young, between 1835 and 1839, my avocation took me to the islands of the Pacific Ocean. On board our ship some natives of these islands served, and from them I learned a good deal of their language ... [On]

February 23rd, 1883, I was at a seance of Mrs. Allen's of Providence, Rhode Island, when a spirit of a Pacific islander materialized himself, and I recognized him by his describing his fall from the rigging, by which he damaged his knee, leaving a permanent enlargement of it; at this seance he placed my hand upon this knee, materialized into its old state. He was called on board Billy Marr."

Spiritism has taught us that the elements of materialization are temporarily borrowed from the mediums and the other persons present. Their radiations and emanations are condensed by the will of the spirits, at first as luminous clusters, and then, as the mass increases, the form becomes more and more visible. This phenomenon is always accompanied, in the seances, by a sensation of cold, indicative of a loss of strength and heat. As we know, heat and light are simply more or less intense vibrational modes of the same dynamic substance over a uniform period of time. In mediums, this loss is considerable and results in very significant differences in bodily weight.

W. Crookes could detect this fact during materializations of the spirit Katie King, by using scales equipped with balance indicators. This is what Mrs. Florence Marryat wrote on the matter:[298]

"I have seen Florrie [Florence Cook] placed on the scale of a weighing machine constructed by Mr. Crookes for the purpose, behind the curtain, whilst the balance remained in sight. I have seen under these circumstances that the medium weighed eight stone in a normal condition, and that as soon as the materialized form was fully developed, the balance ran up to four stone."

In the experiments conducted by Mr. Armstrong and Mr. Reimers in Liverpool (UK), with the help of the mediums Miss Wood and Miss Fairlamb, both mediums and the materialized spirit forms were weighed, and it was discovered that the weight lost by the sensitives was found in the materialized apparitions.[299]

Throughout the duration of these phenomena, the mediums are immersed in a deep trance, similar to death. Their bodies are shrunken; their clothes float around them; their skins hang, flaccid and empty, forming veritable sacks.[300]

The other sitters also feel their strength lessening and their life force somewhat drained. Mr. G. Larsen observed this fact after when his wife appeared:[301]

“This is how the veil was formed and I contributed to its materialization, because the next morning I was very tired, my eyes were dull, my hair and beard had grayed a little: it was obvious that a lot of physical strength had been subtracted from me. In a few days my body regained its vigor, but this proves that persons with mediumistic powers must take some precautions.”

Mrs. F. Marryat reported on a sitting held at medium William Eglinton’s apartment in London on September 5, 1884, in presence of Colonels Stewart and Lean, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Davies, Mr. Morgan and herself, where the spirits showed the experimenters how they went about building themselves a body at the expense of the medium:[302]

“First, Eglinton appeared in full trance among us. He entered backwards with his eyes shut, his breath panting, seemingly in a struggle against the force that was driving him toward us. Once there, he leaned against a chair and we saw a sort of vapor emerge from his left flank, a cloudy mass like some kind of smoke. His legs were lighted up by gleams that traveled in all directions. A white veil stretched over his head and shoulders. This vaporous mass continued to increase, and the oppression felt by the medium became more intense while invisible hands, withdrawing from his flank a kind of light gauze, piled it up on the ground in superimposed layers. We followed with passionate attention the progress of this work. Suddenly the mass evaporated, and in the twinkling of an eye a perfectly formed spirit stood beside Eglinton. No one could say how or where it came from, but it was right there among us. Eglinton sank down on the floor.”

Not only are considerable borrowings made from the medium’s body, but in some cases the latter may be subjected to almost complete disintegration. In the experiments conducted by Aksakof, at Madame d’Espérance’s in Gothenburg, something astonishing happened. The medium’s body, isolated in a dark cabinet, had half disappeared. Thus partially disintegrated and rendered invisible by some mysterious power, its elements had served to materialize the spirits Anna, Yolande and Leila. They had temporarily gone into their phantom forms, and then returned to their primitive state, retaining all their properties, with the medium completely unaware of what was taking place.[303]

A similar phenomenon was observed by Col. Henry Steel Olcott, under conditions of control which made fraud impossible.[304]

The medium, Mrs. Compton, whose earrings had been removed, was fastened to her chair by means of a sturdy sewing thread, passed through the holes in her earlobes and sealing its ends to the back of the chair with sealing wax, which the colonel stamped with his private signet. In addition, the chair was fastened to the floor with thread and wax in a secure manner. Then the white-robed spirit of a little girl, "Katie Brink," appeared and moved around, touching several people. When invited to step on the scale, the spirit lent itself with good grace to the request, and the weight reading was 77 English pounds.

"The spirit came out again," the colonel recounts, "and then I entered the cabinet ... feeling cautiously but thoroughly all about, but, as before, *finding no vestige of the medium*. The chair was there, but no bodily presence sat in it. I then asked the spirit-girl to make herself lighter if possible and she stepped again upon my scales ... I read the figure *fifty-nine pounds*. She appeared yet again, and this time passed from one to another of the spectators, patting this one's head, the other's hand, sitting upon Mr. Hardy's knee, laying her hand gently upon my head, stroking my cheek, and then mounting the scale for me to make my final test. This time she weighed only *fifty-two* pounds, although from first to last there had been no apparent alteration in her dress or bulk."

"After the weighing 'Katie' appeared no more ... I went inside with a lamp, and found ... the medium just as I left her at the beginning of the seance, with every thread unbroken and every seal undisturbed! She sat. There, with her head leaning against the wall, her flesh as pale and as cold as marble, her eyeballs turned up beneath the lids, her forehead covered with a death-like damp, no breath coming from her lungs, and no pulse at her wrist ... the cataleptic woman ... lay thus inanimate for eighteen minutes; life gradually coming back to her body, until respiration and pulse and the temperature of her skin became normal ... I then put her upon the scale. She weighed one hundred and twenty-one pounds!"

The Reverend Archdeacon Colley, Rector of Stockton (Warwickshire, England), delivered a lecture on Spiritualism at Weymouth, on October 6, 1905, during the week of the Anglican Church Congress. This conference made a great deal of noise in Great Britain. It has since been published in a

pamphlet, and I think it interesting to reproduce the following passages:

“Here is an extract from my diary – December 28th, 1877:[305] Five of us were tonight with our esteemed medium,[306] in my rooms – 52, Bernard Street, Russell Square, London. The first abnormal form that came to us on this occasion was that of a little child, like that of any English child of six or seven years of age. This small figure, in view of us all – three gas jets being full on at the time (with warm fire light) – grew into life before us.”

“Not to repeat unnecessarily often how the marvels recorded were brought about, I, at the outset, may say that the coming of our psychic friends almost always was as follows: As a column of support, standing at his right side, I with my left arm at the back usually upheld our entranced medium, having thus the best opportunity that could be desired for closely observing what took place.”

“When in expectation of a materialization (and sometimes suddenly when there was no expectation of any recurrence of the great psychic parturition) there was seen steaming, as from a kettle spout, through the texture and substance of the medium’s black coat, a little below the left breast, toward the side, a vaporous filament, which would be almost invisible until within an inch or two inches of our friend’s body.”

“When it grew in density to a cloudy something, from which (and apparently using up which for the quick evolving of much white raiment) there would then stand, to step forth timidly, as did this little maiden, or in the same way boldly and naturally, to companion with us other of our frequent psychic visitors ...”

“The child-form now abnormally present with us, clad in white, and having beautiful golden hair, had all the actions of human girlhood; clapped its little bands ; pursed its mouth for kisses we each gave it; spoke in a childish manner with a slight lisp; the medium, like an elder brother, instructing it and sending the little one hither and thither to bring this thing or that from different parts of the room, which she went for and brought us in a way quite natural. Then, drawing with winsome confidence to the masculine author of its temporary being, the dainty creature was gradually absorbed, and disappeared, to melt again into our friend’s body ...”

“Then ... came our Egyptian friend ‘The Mahedi.’ The bronze-hued skin of our abnormal visitor, which I was suffered very closely to scrutinize with my Stanhope lens,[307] and observe the flesh markings, the finger nails and toe

nails, the small hands, wrists, feet and ankles, the swarthy, hairy arms and nether limbs to the knee; the features mobile with life, yet at times with a sphinx-like cast of expression; the haughty, prominent nose; general contour of the face – facial angle good; black, piercing, but not unkindly eyes; hair lank and jet, with mustaches and beard, long and drooping; limbs wiry and muscular, and height some six feet eight inches, all added to my first impressions that 'The Mahedi' was an Eastern, but not of India or the Far East."

"My leisurely examination on this occasion of our strange, very tall visitor, was on other occasions repeated; and I was conscious of an amused feeling on the part of our mysterious friend at my rather troublesome anatomizing of his stalwart physical-psychical person from time to time."

"To be made Archbishop of Canterbury I would not ... cut out one word of what I have written of the things first witnessed and reported many years ago, which in silence I have meditated all these seven or eight and twenty years ..."

"Even now, after all my large experience, the things I have witnessed and recorded are so overwhelming ... regarding what I have pledged my word as a clergyman for the truth of, and imperiled my clerical position and prospects carefully and accurately to report."

In addition to spirits' materializations, spontaneous creations of plants and apports[308] of flowers and fruits may sometimes occur.

On June 28, 1890, under the eyes of Aksakof and Professor Boutlerov at Madame d'Espérance's in Gothenburg (Sweden), a golden lily seven feet high was presented by the spirit Yolande. With the help of the sitters, this spirit had mixed sand and loam in a flowerpot, which it then covered with its veil. This white drapery was seen to rise slowly but steadily, widening out as it grew higher and higher; and when Yolande removed it, a tall plant was disclosed, bowed with a mass of heavy blossom which emitted a strong sweet scent. This golden lily subsisted for a whole week before vanishing as mysteriously as it had appeared.[309]

As we have just seen, spirits are able to work in the creation of objects and flowers. They can also act in the formation of clothes, costumes, and

attributes in which they appear to be clothed. The fact that spirits do appear wearing costumes has raised many objections to which it is important to respond.

Let us first recall that, in principle, both thought and will are creative agents. We have already seen how subtle matter obeys their slightest impulses in the apparitions. A spirit can act upon fluids and impart shapes and properties to them according to the goal it wants to reach.

In the earthly domain, this action has already been revealed in the practices of magnetism. By means of the will, a person endowed with healing powers is able to convey curative properties to emanations stemming from him- or herself; and, by extension, to water and certain material objects, such as cloths, metals, etc. Differently, the phenomena of hypnotism and suggestion show us the application of this very same law. Through suggestion, deep changes are produced in the organism of sleeping subjects; or wounds, stigmata and burns are made to appear and disappear; and bodily functions, such as blood flow, secretions, etc., which in the normal state would not be subject to the influence of the will, may be controlled.

There were cases in which an experimenter, by suggesting that a postage stamp or some sealing bread were blisters, transmitted by thought a force to those harmless objects which arose boils filled with fluid over the skin. Others caused cutaneous hemorrhages at will.[310]

Through suggestion, which is above all an act of the will, it has been possible not only to impress sensitives, but also to cause real disorders in them after the absorption of innocuous liquids to which malignant properties were ascribed. It was thus that drunkenness was induced with pure water. More seriously, a subject was made to absorb an imaginary poison, and this poison, in spite of an almost immediate contrary suggestion, caused physiological enormous damage which ruined the subject’s health for a long time. A report about this experiment is kept at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris.[311]

To these examples one should add impressions felt by women during their pregnancy, and how these translated as defects, stains and deformities on the bodies of the children they bore. The influence of such emotions is sometimes very lively. Dr. Goudard recounted the following fact in a presentation delivered at the Society for Psychical Studies, in Marseilles:[312]

“We saw a cultivated man who came out of one of our great schools and

was operated upon in his infancy ... with a double thumb on each side, simulating a crustacean's claw and attributed to the fact that during pregnancy, his mother had been strongly pinched in her hand by a lobster ... [Another mother, who had been] deeply struck by the sight of a gargoyle ... [later gave birth to a fetus whose head had] a strange similarity of aspect with that gargoyle."

A remarkable case was published by the French newspaper *Le Matin* on July 4, 1903:

"A nineteen-year-old woman, Louise Mirbel, had lived for a long time with a twenty-seven-year-old man named Pierre Chauvin, alias 'the Tattooed.' This individual was famous in a special corner of Montparnasse (Paris, France) for the superb series of tattoos that adorned his body. Being a brute and a drunkard, he used to violently beat his mistress, who dared not leave him for fear of his reprisals. About a fortnight ago, P. Chauvin was arrested after a robbery and sentenced to a few months in prison. Louise Mirbel took advantage of the opportunity to escape. Being resolved to quit the shameful life she led, she came to live in the Picpus quarter, where she met a brave shoveler, Jean Barrau, whom she married. One day she felt that she would soon be a mother. But there was a fear in her mind."

"'You see,' she often told her husband, 'I'm afraid that this individual, who took advantage of my youthful inexperience, one day will come to find me. I tremble for you and for me, because 'the Tattooed' is terrible in his vengeance.'"

"In vain J. Barrau tried to appease her fears. At night the poor girl would see her former lover in dreams, and then she would awake trembling. One morning she said to her husband:"

"'I had a horrible dream last night. It seemed to me that "the Tattooed" was there. I had just given birth to our child. He pressed him in his arms and drew on his body all the tattoos he carries himself.'"

"'You are out of your mind, my poor friend,' replied Barrau. 'Forget this man, I tell you, he will never find you again' ..."

"Yesterday morning, Louise Mirbel gave birth to a son. Imagine the shock of those who assisted her, when they saw on the body of the child large bluish spots, in which traces of letters and drawings were readily observed. On the baby's chest a heart pierced by a dagger was clearly visible."

In his book *La Zone-frontière*,[313] Michel Sage recounts two other facts:

“In Italy, a bat wandered in a ballroom, while the ladies rushed to hunt it with their handkerchiefs, until the unfortunate animal dropped on the naked shoulder of one of the ladies, who promptly had a syncope. Soon after, this lady gave birth to a baby girl who carried on her shoulder the perfect imprint of a bat with its wings extended. Every detail was there: its gray hairs, its claws and muzzle. The girl, now grown tall, could never wear anything with a low collar uncovering her shoulder.”

“When they last, weak impressions may produce the same result as sudden and violent impressions. [Dr. Ambroise-Auguste] Liébeault tells that a winemaker resembled the statue of the patron saint of his village, which was in the church. During pregnancy, his mother had had a fixed idea that her child would resemble this saint.”

As we can see, in human beings, thought and will have a deep influence over the organism and its functions. In other cases, our thought can acquire enough intensity to create forms, images capable of impressing photographic plates. There are various examples.

Aksakof reported[314] that in photographic experiments made at Mumler’s and Doctor Child’s in 1862 a picture was obtained of a lady who eagerly wanted to appear with a guitar in her arms. The desired shape appeared. Since then, these cases have multiplied. In suggestion experiments, objects have often been created by thought, which for the senses had a real existence and were subject to the laws of optics.

It is not even necessary that the action be willed. Often, as in the cases of pregnancy mentioned above, the thought is unconscious, nevertheless it produces very significant effects on matter. Similarly on externalized living individuals that appear at a distance. It is enough for their thought to have been directed towards a distant person, for their form to be drawn in the likeness of the latter, in order to be recognized.

If we humans can mentally bring about such effects, what results will the spirit be able to obtain, since it is freed of all fleshly hindrances, and its thought vibrates with a much higher intensity?

Not only does the spirit command the subtle elements of matter, so as to impress the photographic plate and the organs of seeing mediums, but also in visible apparitions for all to see, it can still replicate by will the forms and costumes which used to clothe it on Earth, and made it possible to recognize him or her when incarnated. This is, in fact, the essential aim of such

manifestations. Hence, the draperies, clothes, weapons and attributes whose appearances are provided by spirits.

Most often these accessories have neither physical solidity nor durability. It may happen, however, that a spirit concentrates enough power to produce a concrete materialization of objects, to the point of making them tangible and lasting.

Some spirits are able to change their appearance with prodigious ease, under the very eyes of the sitters. The following is a case which seems to support Aksakof's hypothesis, as stated above.

Mr. Edward A. Brackett reports[315] that, during a materialization seance, the spirit of a tall young man appeared, claiming to be the brother of a lady with the experimenter. She remarked that she could not recognize him, since she had not seen him since he was a boy. Then little by little the figure diminished in size until he was more like the boy she knew.

Let us also recall the case of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, mentioned by Mr. W. J. Colville. She appeared wearing a costume of queen of the fairies that she had worn long before in her youth.[316]

In this case, as in some others, the apparition appears to be merely a mental image exteriorized by the spirit, and which acquires enough material consistency to be perceived by the senses.

Sometimes the spirits give the most enchanted aspect to their forms. In his book *The Debatable Land*,[317] Robert Dale Owen, a former American Minister at the Court of Naples, describes the appearance of a feminine form like this:

"Its brilliancy was a good deal like that of new-fallen snow, in the sunshine; recalling the text which declares the garments of Christ, during his transfiguration, to have been 'exceeding white as snow'; or, again, it was not unlike the finest and freshest Parian marble with a bright light on it, only more brilliant."

Could it be that so-called "miraculous" apparitions of virgins, angels and saints are in fact manifestations of manifestations of this kind?

Summing up, it can be said that the modes of action of the spirit vary according to the resources offered by the environments in which it operates.

Materialization phenomena can be grouped into three categories.

First, those cases in which the double of the exteriorized medium is used and modified by the spirit, to the point of reproducing the aspect which it once had on Earth and even the features of its physiognomy. By will, the spirit is reflected, “photographed” in the medium’s fluidic form. Such transfiguration will be more or less complete depending on the power of the communicating spirit. Thus, in certain experiments, the apparition may retain some resemblance to the medium.

In other cases, the spirit, with the aid of ambient fluids, creates temporary forms which it then animates and directs from without, that is, without being incorporated, as noted by Aksakof.

Finally, there are more numerous cases in which the spirit concretely materializes its own fluid envelope, to the point of reappearing as it was in a previous earthly existence. The materialization would then be a sort of transient reincarnation.

The role of mediums differs essentially according to these cases. They go through all degrees of trance, according to the amount of the borrowings which are to be obtained from them. Sometimes, as with Madame d’Espérance and Mrs. Compton, this borrowing can be nearly limitless. Under other circumstances, the spirits bring with themselves most of the elements needed for the materialization, and the medium remains awake.

The study of forces in action in these phenomena has demonstrated that music and singing may be of help in seances. Their harmonic vibrations facilitate the combining of fluids. Conversely, bright ambient light has proved unfavorable, for it produces a dissolving effect on working fluids, which then require a greater deployment of psychical force. Hence the reason for obscure (dim-lit) sittings, at least at the beginning ofthe experiments.

All those who have observed nature know that light waves disturb the formation of a being during its period of gestation. Every germ, each body, whether vegetable, animal or human, must be constituted in darkness before appearing in daylight. Photography is forced to operate under similar conditions. Image reproduction requires darkness. The same is true of temporary formations of spirits. That is why dark cabinets are available in the rooms where such experiments are conducted, so as to facilitate materialization. Yet sometimes when the force is sufficient, we may see the phenomenon occur right among the sitters.

All these observations have been scientifically confirmed by experiments in wireless telegraphy. According to a communication made by Mr. Guglielmo Marconi to the Royal Society of London,[318] it has been established that radio waves are transmitted better at night than during the day; daylight causes great disturbance on transmissions.

It is thus that Spiritism, after having unveiled the vast empire of forces and unseen elements of nature, has initiated us into the laws that regulate their profound harmony. Through the study of these phenomena, matter, in its most rarefied state, is revealed to us as a subtle mold in which thoughts and actions are imprinted. At the same time, it constitutes an immense reservoir of energies, which, when paired with psychical energies, engender force par excellence, the creative power from which emanates the Universe in its ever changing and eternal manifestations.

XXI
Identity of spirits

So far the exposition of Spiritist facts presented above amply demonstrates the survival of the soul. No theory other than that of interventions by the deceased can explain certain psychical phenomena in their various forms. Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace once said: “No more evidence is needed to prove spiritualism for no accepted fact in science has a greater or stronger array of proof in its behalf.”[319] Echoing this, W. Crookes declared that Spiritism had been scientifically demonstrated.

From an objective or external viewpoint, the evidence furnished by apparitions and materializations can leave no doubt. However, when it comes to the subjective side, as regards other modes of manifestation, there remains a difficulty, namely, obtaining proofs of identity of the spirits in sufficient number to satisfy skeptics, with precise indications unknown to the sitters, and verifiable after the fact.

It is often objected to Spiritists that the communications as a whole are too vague, that they are devoid of informative details, revelations and well-defined facts that would be capable of establishing the identity of communicating spirits and convincing researchers to admit their reality.

Of course, difficulties as such cannot be ignored. They are inherent in the very nature of things and differences of environment. Beings living on the same level as humans, and endowed with the same senses, can communicate with each other by various means which may be as many elements of certainty. We would like to extend these different modes of observation and control, applicable in the human environment, to the domain of the unseen, and then demand from its inhabitants manifestations as convincing and precise as those which ensure our conviction of phenomena of a physical nature. This, however, is almost unattainable. The inhabitant of the invisible plane has many obstacles to overcome. The means at its disposal to enlighten and persuade us are limited. It cannot manifest itself without a medium, and mediums, albeit unconsciously, almost invariably introduce a part of themselves, of their mentality, into phenomena.

A spirit that wishes to express itself with the help of organs other than its own will experience great embarrassment. It resembles a person who would talk to us in a very inconvenient situation, depriving it of the use of its faculties. One must proceed with care when dealing with spirits, ask clear questions and show patience and kindness, in order to obtain satisfactory results.

"My dear friends," said the spirit George Pelham to Misters Hodgson and Hart,[320] "do not look at me too critically; to try to transmit your thoughts through the organism of a medium is like trying to crawl through a hollow log."

The spirit of Robert Hyslop then said to his son:[321] "Everything seems so clear to me and when I try to tell you, James, I cannot."

What the spirits of Mrs. Piper had said, was expressed by the spirit guide of my own mediumistic group in the following terms: "On the spiritual plane, everything is ample, broad and easy for us. When we descend to Earth, everything is restricted, all things narrow."

Another objection is that in most cases of reported identities the facts and evidence by which the personality of the communicating spirits can be determined with certainty are of common and sometimes even trivial nature. Experience has shown that it is almost impossible to proceed otherwise. Details supposedly common and idle seem to be precisely the most reliable means of forming one's judgment upon the authors of such phenomena.

For the purpose of comparison and control, Professor James H. Hyslop had a telegraph line established between two of Columbia University's buildings, 500 feet apart, and then placed at the extremities two telegraphic employees, through whom unknown interlocutors had to communicate together and establish their identity. Under these conditions, approaching those found in mediumship – the distance here taking place on the different planes – the professor was able to see how difficult it was to establish identity in a probative way. The result was usually achieved only by means of the most common indications and of unimportant narratives. The professor observed that the methods used by the interlocutors were absolutely the same as those adopted by the spirits in the case of Mrs. Piper.

With regard to the difficulties encountered by the operators, Prof. Hyslop expressed himself as follows:[322]

"While I was following these experiments, I was struck with the fact that

one also notices when there is only a limited time to communicate by telephone. All the attention of the communicator is strained by the desire to choose incidents that are characteristic so as to be identified by a particular friend. As the interlocutor is limited by time to choose, there is an interesting struggle and confusion in the mind, which anybody can realize by themselves, when practicing a choice of incidents for this purpose. One can imagine the situation of a disincarnate spirit that has only a few minutes to give its communication and is probably struggling against enormous difficulties, which we cannot fathom."

Professor Hyslop was a sagacious and methodical observer. It should be noted, however, that he had studied only isolated cases in Spiritism. An experiment of thirty years has shown us that, notwithstanding the difficulties inherent in any mode of Spiritist communication, proofs of identity are much more abundant than generally believed. In certain private sittings, evidence of the survival of those we loved is given every day; but these proofs are almost always kept hidden, because they touch the intimate life of the experimenters. Many of them dread hostile criticism and are not willing to give their most sacred feelings and the most intimate secrets of their hearts to indifferent, mocking skeptics.

Often, spirits unknown to the sitters come to give messages to living relatives, messages that sometimes contain original traits, proofs but stay without reply. Most of these manifestations remain ignored. People are afraid to be taunted by superficial scholars with their prejudices toward the common details, and always ready to reject facts that go beyond the circle of their usual knowledge. It follows that the most decisive manifestations seldom reach the public.

In the same sense, there is much circumspection and a great restraint on the part of the spirits in open seances. It is especially in the intimacy of the family and some friends that the best elements are gathered to obtain good evidence. Then, with the aid of affection and harmony of thoughts, reciprocal trust is established, and with it, sincerity and freedom from constraints. The spirit encounters a set of fluidic conditions therein that will ensure the transmission of its thought with all the necessary clarity and detail that are required for bringing conviction into the souls of the sitters.

Higher-order spirits do not lend themselves willingly to fulfill our demands. Their communications always have a moral and impersonal

character; their thoughts hover too high above the spheres of individuality, so that it is not painful for them to descend to our level again. Most have experienced sacrificial lives on Earth, suffered painful lifetimes, the price of their elevation. They do not like, by proclaiming their names, to adorn themselves with their merits. To convince skeptics, they have other resources. They prefer to introduce into our seances lesser evolved spirits, individualities which we have known on Earth, and which, by their originality, their manner of speaking, gesticulating and thinking, will furnish us with satisfactory proofs. This is how the spirit guides of my group usually proceeded. Under their direction spirits that are rather common, but animated with good intentions, manifest themselves: a humble street vendor, a village blacksmith, a chatty old maid. Others, deceased relatives of members of the group, manifested themselves during the trance with characteristic and inimitable traits. Their identity was established through a variety of details and domestic facts; but, while they were of great interest to those who had known them, they would be considered fastidious by others, and could not be published. The multiplicity and everyday repetition of such minor facts which abound in our existence, though impossible to reproduce and analyze, end up impressing the most refractory minds and triumphing over the most tenacious doubters.

Every single day, in many mediumistic groups, revelation of names, dates and unknown facts later verified for accuracy, are obtained. But they cannot be divulged to the public at large, for they are of interest to persons who are still alive and will not authorize their publication. Sometimes they include scientific teachings, such as those mentioned by Aksakof in the case of Mr. J. P. Barkas of Newcastle (UK),[323] which are far beyond the medium's intelligence.

At other times, there are writing phenomena, such as those reported by the same author,[324] with authentic signatures of personages, which the medium had never seen, as for example those of the cure Burnier and Jean Chaumontet, syndic of Chessenaz (France), who had both died half a century earlier, obtained through the medium Hélène Smith, of Geneva.[325] Professor Flournoy attributes them to an awakening of the medium's subconscious. As we have seen, this is nothing but an ad hoc theory intended to conveniently explain what one does not understand or has no wish to understand.

In his book *Spirit-Identity* (London, Spiritualist Alliance, 1902), Stainton

Moses (under the pseudonym of M. A. Oxon) recounts some remarkable phenomena of spirit identity obtained through writing mediumship and backed by official testimony. He claims to have about a hundred cases of this kind, and many other experimenters could have said the same.[326]

Among the numerous phenomena of this kind, I would like to highlight the case cited by the British journal *Light* of May 27, 1899, obtained through the mediumship of Mrs. Bessie Russell-Davies, of London:

A request for proof of identity, from persons attached to the court of Vienna (Austria), had been addressed to Mrs. Bessie Russell-Davies. The questions were enclosed in a sealed envelope which remained closed. After several days of research, the spirit guide of the medium came back with five foreign spirits, who dictated a reply in an unknown language. After examination, the consulters acknowledged that this language was ancient Magyar, a language known only to a few scholars. This reply was signed by five people who had lived two centuries before, the deceased members of the Hungarian family who had requested this testimony.[327]

Here is another proof still more conclusive in its simplicity than any noisy manifestations. It is taken from the work of S. Watson, an American publicist, in his *Spiritualism: its phenomena* (New York, Edward O. Jenkins, 1880; p. 349):

“In the first communication we received from Gen. Thos. Rivers ... he put a W. as his double initial. We knew this was an error, supposing it to be a freak of Dr. Mansfield’s pencil ; yet we did not feel at liberty to erase it. Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, is our maxim. We had known Rivers in his college days ... but never saw or heard of his having a W in his name until it was put there in his communication, which contained a number of facts that we did not then know, but afterward learned to be true of persons, names, and things. The opponents of Spiritualism made sport of Gen. Rivers not affixing his proper name to his communication ...”

“The mother of Gen. Thos. Rivers was stopping. As soon as she came in the parlor she said in substance: ‘Bro. Watson, my son Thomas appeared to me the other night, and said, Mother, you think it strange that I had W in my name when I signed it to a communication I gave to Bro. Watson on the 24th of May ... Don’t you remember, mother, when I was a boy I was so excitable that the boys gave me the nickname of Wasp, and that I always signed my name with a W in my boyhood days? Look at any of my old copybooks and

you will always find a W in my name.' She said she had not thought of it for twenty years."

The September 1900 issue of *Revista de Estudios Psicológicos* (directed by José M. Fernanández Colavida, Barcelona, Spain) published the following case of identity, along with supporting documents:

Three persons, a professor of mathematics, a doctor in medicine, and a clergyman, had begged Mr. Segundo Oliver, a disinterested medium, to furnish proof of the reality of spirits. After a moment's reflection, his hand mechanically traced the following words: "Isidora, age 50, born in San Sebastian, died on March 31, 1870 from intestinal cancer; has left three sons; their names and ages: P., 15 years old; C., 19 years old, M., 25 years old."

Upon reading these details, one of the consulters recognized his mother's spirit. Surprised and moved, he asked her if she had any advice to give him. Then the medium picked up the pencil; yet, to his own astonishment, he drew in a few minutes the portrait of a person unknown to him, and in whom the consulter recognized the spirit of Isidora, who had never, in her lifetime, consented to be photographed. The medium for his turn had never learned drawing, nor did he know how to draw. All the sitters declared that they had thought of nothing of what was written, so it could not have been a mere phenomenon of suggestion or thought transmission.

Elsewhere, Mr. G. Owen wrote the following in *The Spiritual Record*:[328]

"Twelve years ago, I counted among my close friends a well-known senator from California who was director of a prosperous bank in San José (California). Dr. Knox – that was his name – was a profound thinker and a resolute partisan of materialistic theories. Feeling close to his end, he often spoke of eternal slumber. One day I said to him, 'Let's make a pact, Doctor: if you live up there, you will try whatever possible to communicate these few words to me: I am still alive.' After his death, in presence of a good medium, I wiped a slate clear, put a crayon on it, and held the slate upward against the lower face of the table top. We heard the sound of the crayon scraping on the slate, and on removing it, we found the following lines: 'Dear friend Owen, although my old ideas on future life have been thoroughly overturned, my disillusionment, I must confess, has been agreeable, and I am happy, my friend, to be able to say to you: I am still alive. Your friend always, W. Knox.' The handwriting was so conformable to that of the deceased that it was acknowledged as authentic by staff at the bank he used to manage during

his lifetime.”

Incorporation phenomena have also provided numerous instances of identity. In the manifestations of which Mrs. Piper was the instrument, we can see the greatest unity of character and consciousness among the communicating spirits, particularly in the spirit guides or spirit-controls. None of them can be regarded as a second personality of the medium; all appear as autonomous individualities, endowed with a great intensity of life, sincerity, and reality.

Despite the difficulties they sometimes experience, the personalities of spirits G. Pelham and Robert Hyslop are most trenchant and never contradict themselves.[329]

University Rector Oliver Lodge, in volumes XII and XIII of the *Proceedings of the SPR*, also cites several cases of identity obtained by him, using the mediumship of Mrs. Piper. One of his uncles, who had died twenty years earlier, reported details of his youth which were completely forgotten by all the surviving members of his family; they could only be verified after a long and meticulous investigation. His deceased father-in-law came to give him precise details about his death, which happened in moving circumstances, along with names and dates entirely effaced from Mr. Lodge’s memory. He reports other remarkable traits of identity emanating from several of his departed friends.

Reverend Minot J. Savage, a famous speaker in the United States, cites a touching case of identification:[330]

“I was having a sitting with Mrs. Piper. My boy claimed to be present ... He said: ‘Papa, I want you to go at once to my room. Look in my drawer, and you will find there a lot of loose papers. Among them are some which I wish you to take and destroy at once.’ He would not be satisfied until I had promised to do this.”

“I went ... to his room, searched his drawer, gathered up all the loose papers, looked through them, and at once saw the meaning and importance of what he had asked me to do. There were things there which he had jotted down and trusted to the privacy of his drawer which he would not have had made public for the world. I will not, of course, violate his privacy by detailing what they were. I will simply say that his anxiety in regard to them was entirely justified.”

The following fact took place in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, at the house

of Dr. O. Vidigal, resident at No. 2 Rua do Triunfo, with his family consisting of his wife, two sons and his old father. His mother had been dead for three months:[331]

The medium was a little Spanish girl aged twelve, orphaned by her father, and taken as a household servant on the same day at the local office of immigration where she had just arrived. She did not know a word of Portuguese, nor had she ever seen the city, and never knew the doctor. Mr. Eduardo Silva, a friend of the family, who could speak Spanish, had, in speaking to the young servant, the spontaneous idea of magnetizing her. The child fell asleep, and in a few moments fell into deep trance.

She then claimed to see her father, who spoke to her, and made her know that an old lady, present at that moment, had a communication to make to Dr. Vidigal. She gave such an exact description of this lady that the members of the family immediately recognized the deceased mother of the doctor.

The old lady's spirit commanded her son to go into her room – no one had entered it since her death – to take the sum of 75,000 réis[332] in the sewn pocket of a black silk garment hanging on the wall and to hand them over to her husband.

After some reflection, Dr. Vidigal, accompanied by Doctor Silva and other witnesses, entered the apartment not without difficulty, for the lock was rusty, and found things exactly as they had been pointed out to him.

Elsewhere, Mr. Vincent Fornaro gave a detailed account of the whims of a spirit called "Baccala,"[333] whose proofs of identity were easy to establish.

A broker in his lifetime, he was a very cheerful, very witty, and very debauched man. Communications suffered from this, nevertheless they were of genuine interest from an experimental viewpoint, because of the various forms of identity proof they presented, even by means of spontaneous materializations.

Among numerous experiments with "Baccala," Mr. Vincent Fornaro cites the most impressive of all:

"My father was seriously ill ... He had not feared the risks of influenza, and paid the consequences with a terrible affection of the bronchi. The most illustrious physicians came ... Some of them crushed our hearts by the most dreadful prognoses, others brought us relief with comforting words of hope. We lived only to preserve the life of our dear sick person ... in these painful memories, Baccala had his share too!"

“One evening, while in a state discouragement that overwhelms the soul and the brain, making us think the unthinkable in order to cling to a hope, we prayed Baccala to put us in communication with the spirit of one of the most renowned doctors. The reply was that we would be satisfied immediately. Indeed, shortly afterwards, raps on the pedestal table announced that a spirit was present. We asked his name to which he replied: Domenico Cotugno! – Baccala had chosen well! We asked Cotugno’s spirit to visit our father and tell us the truth, whatever it might be.”

“My father was asleep; at this moment he awoke with a feeling of regret, reproached us for having disturbed him; and still very sleepy, not realizing that there was no one beside him, he continued to reproach us for turning him around again and again, and beating on his chest and shoulders. Obviously, the doctor’s visit had occurred, and now we were trembling: our heart beating violently as we were held in a state of suspense! Shortly afterwards the table made a slight movement. We questioned, anxiously and a single horrible word was the answer: *Resignation!* We understood, and a fortnight later our house was plunged into mourning.”

Dr. Moutin, President of the Société Française d’Étude des Phénomènes Psychiques, reported the following phenomenon in the *Revue Scientifique et Morale*:[334]

“In 1884, during the cholera epidemic in Marseilles, I was present at one of my relatives’ home, who was snatched by this terrible plague in the space of a few hours. Before dying, when she could no longer speak, she wanted to tell me something, which I thought was important ... from the desperate gestures she was making. At last, gathering all her strength, she twice uttered the word ‘glass,’ pointing for me, with her right hand, the mirror that adorned the mantelpiece in her room.”

“Her husband, a sailor [named Mr. J.], was at sea at the time ... Knowing that his dead wife had the habit of hiding money around, he did not hesitate to remove the back of the mirror in question to make sure there was nothing hidden there. His search yielded no result.”

“About fifteen months later, while I was in a Spiritist seance at Mrs. Décius Deo’s, a reputable medium of Avignon (France) ... being entranced, she talked to me, calling me by my first name, which she certainly did not know: ‘Lucien! I came to tell you what I could not reveal before my death ... Shortly before I died, I had placed a 500-franc bond of the Compagnie

Fraissinet, between the glass and the back of the mirror ... in the kitchen ... My husband is going to move [and maybe sell that object] ... He must be informed immediately.'"

"I again wrote to Mr. J. ... [who] made the necessary searches and found the bond at the place indicated."

In her book *Souvenirs et Problèmes Spirites*,[335] Mrs. Claire Galichon recounts that, having evoked Beethoven, she asked the spirit that had manifested itself in the name of the famous composer to give her some proof of his identity by telling her of a fact taken from his life and unknown both to her and to Miss R., who was attending the seance.

The spirit replied, "Gladly. Here you are: In my lifetime I devoted great love and deep admiration; love for Julie, admiration for Napoleon. Yes, it was for him that I composed the *Eroica* symphony."

These two assertions, which were unknown to Claire G. and Miss R., are correct. Although Beethoven did not marry, for several years he was enamored of Miss Julie (Giullieta) Guicciardi who later married Count von Gallenberg.

It is also known that Beethoven had been an admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte's genius and had represented him as a republican [sic] hero, bringing together in him the greatest patriotic virtues. When he began to compose his *Sinfonia Eroica* (Heroic Symphony), he was determined to give it the name Bonaparte, and he wished to dedicate it to the then First Consul of the French Republic. His dedication was already written when, one day, one of his friends announced to him that the First Consul had just declared himself Emperor. Beethoven exclaimed: "So he is just like all the rest!" And instead of the original inscription of his work, "Bonaparte," he wrote: "Sinfonia Eroica ... composed to celebrate the memory of a great man."

Some spirits reveal their identity, during the trance, by means of a special language ignored by the medium.

Such was the case of the spirit Forcade, which communicated with Father Grimaud, at Avignon in 1899, by means of a sign language used by certain speech-impaired, profoundly deaf individuals, following a special method that Forcade himself had invented in his lifetime. This manifestation took place during a sitting where only Father Grimaud could understand its meaning.[336]

Aksakof [337] cites a similar case. The spirit of a deceased woman, who had

been speech and hearing impaired in her lifetime, gives a communication to her husband, through the medium Mrs. Corwin, of Syracuse (USA), using the manual alphabet of the deaf-mutes:

“The scene was moving: the husband stood opposite the entranced medium and asked his wife various questions, by means of signs, and his wife responded to his thoughts in the same way, through the extraneous body of a person who had never practiced this mode of conversation before.”

Other spirits of victims of accidents guide persons whose mission is to find their bodies:

When a boat sank in the port of Algiers (Algeria) in 1895, a man had drowned and his body could not be found. Commander D. A. Courmes, of the navy, who was present in the town at a Spiritualist sitting, summoned the drowned man. The latter replied to the call, manifested through the medium, changing his voice and manner, and gave a narrative, which reads as follows: “When the boat sank, I was on the ladder. I was overthrown; my right leg passed between two rungs, and the lever arm of the body weight produced a fracture of the leg which did not allow me to free myself. You will find my body stuck in the ladder when the boat is refloated. Needless to look elsewhere.”[338]

Manifestations obtained by means of the mediumistic table are no less rich in proofs of identity.

Commander P. Mantin (alias L. Dauvil), in his *Vieilles Notes* [*Old Notes*], [339] reports the following fact, which occurred among his wife’s family on Reunion Island (Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar) in 1860. He is supported by the testimony of several of his relatives:

“One evening, when the B— family was assembled around a table in the great drawing-room, in full light, a spirit asked us to call Mr. A. B-, my deceased wife’s grandfather in n order to make a very important communication to him. Mr. A. B— was quietly smoking his pipe under the veranda, thinking of his sugarcane fields, his sugar plant, rather than spirits, in which he did not believe. Then he was called a second time. ‘Come, dear father, the spirit is waiting for you to tell you its name.’ ‘Leave me alone, my children, don’t bother me with your amusements.’ In the end, one of his daughters came to beg him to come back to the drawing-room. ‘All right, my child, let’s see what your spirit wants,’ and the excellent man approached the table, surrounded by all his children, pronouncing the formula, ‘Spirit, what

do you want of me?' And the unseen dictated: "Dear Mr. B—, I'm Captain Régnier; remember that I had loaded your sugar cargo on your sailboat, the Bois Rouge, two months ago, I set sail on (exact date), do you remember?' 'Yes. Well?' 'Well, I have come to tell you that your ship, the Bois Rouge, was lost at sea with all hands, in a storm on the rocky shores of Simon's Bay at the Cape of Good Hope (south Africa) ten days ago. I and all my crew have perished, and my soul could not leave the sea waves, on which it has wandered since that day. I shall be at peace only after having assured you that we have done everything we could to save the ship, but the sea was too rough, and the God's will has thus been fulfilled.' 'If this really happened,' replied Mr. B—, 'it is your death, and that of your brave sailors, that I regret the most; yet, on the other hand, allow me to doubt the veracity of such sad news. If you drowned, how can you be there at this table?' 'That is the whole truth,' replied the pedestal table by quickly striking one foot on the floor, 'you will see, my dear M. B—, that the shipowner in Nantes (France) will confirm the news to you in four months; so long, Mr. B—, take care of yourself and your family.' 'And so it was, exactly four months after that evening,' said my wife's grandfather to me, telling this story thirty-five years later. We did not have then, as we do now, steamships which bring us the mail twice a month. 'The loss of the Bois Rouge vessel, with all its crew and the brave Captain Régnier, was really confirmed to me. What to say?' added the dear old man philosophically."

Here is another probative case, attested by William Thomas Stead and published in French by the *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme* of January 1904 (vol. IX, p. 439):[340]

"For weeks and months before my brother left the form we conversed freely on the subject of spirit communion and such matters, and one morning he requested me to bring him a small piece of brick, also pen and ink; he then made two marks on one side and one on the other with the ink, then breaking the brick in two, gave me one piece, telling me at the time to take care of it, and some day he would hide the other piece away where no one but himself would know, and after leaving the form, if possible, would return in some way and tell me where it was. I could then compare them together, and it would be a test that he could return and communicate, and my mind Could not have any influence over it, as I did not know where he put it."

"After he left the form our anxiety was very great to hear and learn all we

could of communicating with spirits, and for months we got nothing satisfactory. We then commenced sitting at the table at home (mother and myself) ... at last it commenced tipping, and ... by calling the alphabet we spelled out: 'You will find that piece of brick in the cabinet under the tomahawk.— Benja.'"[341]

"I went to that room and took the key, unlocked the cabinet, which had not been touched by anyone after he locked it and put away the key. There I found that piece of brick just as it had spelled out, and it corresponded with the piece I had retained, fitting on exactly where he broke it off the piece I had."

"One more little incident I will mention, for to me it is as valuable as the other. He wrote me a letter (about the time he gave me the piece of brick) and sealed it, saying at the time it was not to be answered, but the contents of the letter to be told. I got that in the same way I did the other, by calling the alphabet and the table tipping. It was these words: 'Julia! do right and be happy, – Benja.'"

Spirit photography also furnishes its contingent of proofs. The *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme* of January 1909 (vol. XV, p. 529) published an article by the same W. T. Stead entitled "Comment communiquer avec l'Au-delà?"[342] from which I will now quote a passage relating to photographs of the unseen. It begins like this:

"I have referred to spirit photography. Let me disarm any skeptical reader by admitting that nothing is more easy than to fake bogus spirit photographs, and further that an ex- pert conjurer can almost always cheat the most vigilant observer. The use of marked plates, which I handle, expose, and develop myself, no doubt afford some protection against fraud. But my belief in the authenticity of spirit photographs rests upon a far firmer foundation than that of the fallible vigilance of the experimenter. The supreme test of an authentic spirit photograph is that a plainly recognizable portrait of a dead person shall be obtained by a photographer who knows nothing whatever of the existence of such a person, and that no visible form shall be seen by the sitter in front of the camera."

"I have had such photographs not once but many times. I will here only mention one. The photographer whose mediumship enables him to photograph the Invisibles is a very old and rather illiterate man, to whom this faculty was at one time a serious hindrance to his photographic business. He

is a clairvoyant and clairaudient. During the late Boer war I went with a friend to have a sitting with him, wondering who would come. I had hardly taken my seat before the old man said:"

"I had a great fright the other day. An old Boer came into the studio carrying a gun. He fairly frightened me, he looked so fierce, so I said to him, 'Go away; I don't like guns.' And he went away. Now he's back again. He came in with you. He has not got his gun now, and he does not look so fierce. Shall we let him stay?"

"'By all means,' I replied. 'Do you think you could get his photograph?'"

"'I don't know,' said the old man; 'I can try.'"

"So I sat down in front of the camera, and an exposure was duly made. Neither my friend nor I could see any other person in the room but the photographer and ourselves. Before the plate was removed I asked the photographer:"

"You spoke to the old Boer the other day. Could you speak to him again?"

"'Yes,' he said; 'he's still there behind you.'"

"Would he answer any question if you asked him?"

"'I don't know,' said the old man; 'I can try.'"

"Ask him what his name is!"

"The photographer appeared to put a mental question, and to listen for a reply. Then he said:"

"'He says his name is Piet Botha.'"

"'Piet Botha,' I objected. 'I know Philip, Louis, Chris, and I do not know how many other Bothas. But Piet I never heard of.'"

"'That's what he says his name is,' doggedly replied the old man."

"When he developed the plate there was seen standing behind me a hirsute, tall, stalwart man, who might have been a Boer or a Moujik. I said nothing, but waited till the war came to an end, and General Botha came to London. I sent the photograph to him by Mr. Fischer, who was Prime Minister of the old Orange Free State. Next day Mr. Wessels, another Free State Delegate, came to see me."

"'Where did you get that photograph,' he asked, 'the photograph you gave to Mr. Fischer?'"

"I told him exactly how it had come."

"He shook his head. 'I don't hold with superstition me, how did you get that portrait? That man did not know William Stead – that man was never in

England.’”

“‘Well,’ I replied, ‘I have told you how I got it, and you need not believe me if you don’t like. But why are you so excited about it?’”

“‘Why?’ said he, ‘because that man was a near relative of mine. I have got his portrait hanging up in my house at home.’”

“‘Really,’ I said. ‘Is he dead?’”

“‘He was the first Boer Commandant killed in the siege of Kimberly.’”

“And what was his name?”

“‘Pietrus Johannes Botha,’ he replied, ‘but we always called him Piet Botha for short.’”

“I still have the portrait in my possession. It has been subsequently identified by two other Free Staters who knew Piet Botha well.”

“This, at least, is not a case which telepathy can explain. Nor will the hypothesis of fraud hold water. It was the merest accident that I asked the photographer to see if the spirit would give his name. No one in England, so far as I have been able to ascertain, knew that any Piet Botha ever existed.”

In many circumstances, deceased persons may give instructions and directions on how to settle their earthly affairs. They also help to find hidden or lost wills.

Dr. Bernhard Cyriax, in his pamphlet, *Die Lehre vom Geist* [*The Doctrine of the Spirit*] (Berlin, c. 1890)[343] reports a fact of this kind in which he took part:

“A young man from Baltimore, named Roberts, had been brought up by one of his aunts, a wealthy unmarried woman, who, having adopted him, provided him with a full education, and had him married. He had become a family man, when his aunt died suddenly. No will was found, and interested relatives took it upon themselves to evict Mr. Roberts. The latter, perplexed, was advised by some friends to consult with Mrs. Morill, a test medium, who evoked the deceased aunt. This spirit made it known that the will was locked up in a linen cupboard on the upper floor of their villa. It was only after having disheveled all the contents of the cupboard that the document as it was described was finally found inside a stocking. Nobody in the world could have had any idea of the hiding place, least of all the medium. The spirit of his aunt alone could be in a position to give this information.”

Aksakof reports a similar case in the *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. VI, London, January 31, 1890, p. 353:[344]

“[A letter from] Prince Emile von Wittgenstein ... addressed to the widow of General von Korf, in which he informed her that a spiritualistic communication had been received by him in the name of her deceased husband, indicating the place where his will would be found ... when the letter of Prince von Wittgenstein was read, it was apparent, to the astonishment of those present, that the place indicated in the spiritualistic communication ... was precisely that in which the Baron [Joseph Korf] had at last found it.”[345]

To these facts, two cases of identity may be added, consisting of writings or conversations in languages ignored by the medium, as published by E. Bozzano in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 20, January 1910.

The first case was reported by F. W. H. Myers in his essay, “The Subliminal Consciousness” (in *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. IX, year 1894, p. 124), and refers to an episode of writing obtained by means of an eleven-year-old daughter of Mr. Hugh Junor Brown, who published it in a book entitled *The Holy Truth* (Arthur Hallah, 1876). Myers had personally known the relater and assures readers of his perfect sincerity. The latter’s account is reproduced below:

“One day when out walking with my wife I met a black man whom I had never seen before, but whom I recognized as a Kaffir from large holes made in his ears peculiar to that race. I accosted him in his native tongue, at which he seemed rather surprised, and I gave him my address, telling him to call on me. This he did just as we were sitting down to investigate this subject. I told the servant to show him into the room, and on asking him if any of his spirit-friends were present, my daughter’s hand wrote out several Kaffir names, which on my reading out to him he recognized, and which evidently caused him great astonishment. On asking if they had any message for him, a sentence was written in the Kaffir language, some of the words of which were beyond my comprehension. On my reading the message out to the Kaffir he understood every word of it except one. This I pronounced in various ways to try to make him comprehend, but all to no purpose, when my daughter’s hand was influenced to write ‘Click with the mouth.’ This reminded me of a peculiar click which frequently accompanies the sounding of the letter ‘T’ in the Kaffir language, and on my pronouncing this word he understood the meaning of it at once.”

“I may state my daughter does not know a word of Kaffir, having been

born several years after I was last in that country. I inquired who influenced her hand to write, as the art of writing is generally unknown to Kaffirs, and was informed my old friend H. S., whose native name was ‘Nonquambeen,’ had written the message at the request of the Kaffir’s spirit-friends. I may add H. S. was a well-educated man, whose memory I hold in regard, and who when in this life could talk the Kaffir language fairly, having been an old settler in Natal. I explained to my Kaffir visitor that the Insleseea, or souls of his friends, were present, at which he seemed rather terrified.”

Mr. Chedo Mijatovitch, formerly Minister Plenipotentiary of Serbia, in London, wrote the following letter to the director of *Light* (vol. XXVIII, no. 1419, p. 136, March 21, 1908):

“I am not yet a Spiritist, but am now decidedly on the way to become one … In that belief I have been strengthened by a personal experience, which I consider it almost a duty to communicate to you for publication.” (At this point he tells that several Hungarian Spiritists had written to him, asking him to go to some reputed medium in London, so as to get in touch, if possible, with the spirit of a former Serbian sovereign, and consult it on a certain matter.)

“As just about that time,” he continues, “my wife read somewhere about the remarkable powers of a certain Mr. Vango in that direction, I went to Mr. Vango. I never saw that gentleman before, and I am sure he never saw me before that day. Nor is there any reason to suppose that he had been informed, or that he could guess who I was. To my question if he could put me in communication with a certain spirit, he answered modestly that sometimes he succeeds in doing so, but not always, as other spirits sometimes come forward whom the inquirer does not want. However, he was willing to try, and requested me to concentrate all my thoughts on the spirit with whom I wished to speak.”

“After Mr. Vango had put himself into the trance, he said: ‘Yes, here is the spirit of a young man who is most anxious to tell you something, but he talks in a language of which I do not understand a word.’”

“The king on whom I concentrated my thoughts died in 1350 as a middle-aged man, I wondered who the young man could be whose spirit was anxious to talk with me, and asked Mr. Vango to reproduce at least one single word pronounced by that young spirit. He said he would try to do so. He bent towards the wall, in front of which he sat in an armchair, and listened for

some time intensely. Then he slowly repeated, to my utter astonishment, these words in the Serbian language, '*Molim vas pishite moyoy materi Nataliyi da ye molim da mi oprosti*,' 'I request you to write to my mother Natalie that I beg of her to forgive me.' Of course, I immediately recognized that it was the spirit of the murdered King Alexander, I asked Mr. Vango how the young man looked, to which he answered at once: 'Oh, horrible; his body is covered with wounds.' If I needed a further proof that it was the spirit of King Alexander, I got it when Mr. Vango said, 'The spirit wants me to tell you that he now very much regrets that he did not follow your advice concerning a certain monument, and the policy connected with it.' This related to some confidential advice I gave King Alexander two years before his assassination, and which he thought he could not entertain at that time, and perhaps would do in the beginning of the year 1904. I ought to add that Mr. Vango reproduced the Serbian words in a peculiar manner, reading syllable by syllable, commencing from the last one and going backwards to the first ..."

"As I make this statement in the interest of the truth, I do not hesitate to sign my full name and character."

"[Signed:] Chedo Mijatovitch, formerly Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Serbia to the Court of St. James; 39 Redcliffe Gardens, S. W., [London], March 9th, 1908."

Finally, Mr. D. D. Home's wife, in her book *His Life and Mission* (London, Trübner & Co., 1888, pp. 19–24), describes a whole set of identity proofs obtained through phenomena of seeing and hearing mediumship, which is worth of being reproduced below:[346]

"In August, 1852, after spending a week at Springfield [Massachusetts], where he was prostrated by severe illness, he went on a visit to Mr. Ward Cheney of South Manchester, near Hartford, Connecticut, one of the most eminent of American manufacturers ... [The manifestations] attending Home's introduction to the Cheneys were somewhat remarkable."

"As he entered the hall of their residence at South Manchester, a sound resembling the rustling of a heavy silk dress attracted his attention. He looked round, and was surprised to see no one. A few minutes later, when talking to Mr. Cheney in one of the sitting rooms, Home again heard the rustling of the dress, and again sought in vain tor anything that might account for such a sound. His host noticed his startled look, and naturally asked him the reason

of it. Home, unwilling to make much of the matter, only replied that he had been l very ill, and his nervous system was probably out of order. He had hardly spoken the words, when looking through the open door into the hall, he saw standing there a little, active-looking elderly lady, clad in a heavy dress of gray silk. The apparent mystery was explained; and as the thought passed through his mind, the dress again rustled."

"This time Mr. Cheney also heard the sound. 'What is that?' he asked, looking towards the hall. 'Oh,' said Home, who, from the life-like distinctness of the figure, had not the slightest thought that it could be other than of flesh and blood, 'only the dress of that elderly lady in the gray silk rustling.' Mr. Cheney made no response; and his guest's thoughts were diverted from the subject by the entrance of the other members of the family. The lady of the gray silk was not among them; nor, to his surprise, did she appear at dinner. He expected that his host would make some remark about her, but nothing was said; and this singular reserve naturally set the visitor wondering who she might be. As he was leaving the dining-room, the dress again rustled, close to him; and he heard a voice say very distinctly, 'I am annoyed that a coffin should have been placed above mine.'"

"Astonished beyond expression, Home repeated this strange message to Mr. and Mrs. Cheney, and related what he had previously seen and heard. His listeners stared at him and at each other in mute astonishment, till finally Mr. Cheney broke silence."

"'The style of dress,' he said, 'we perfectly recognize, even to the peculiar color and heavy texture; but as for this story of a coffin having been placed on hers, it is as incorrect as it's ridiculous.'"

"Home did not know what to answer. Till he heard the words, he had not for a moment suspected the visionary character of the figure; and even now he was not aware what relationship existed between the mysterious visitant and his hosts. He waited to see what would happen next; and what happened was that, an hour later, the voice again sounded in his ear, uttering the self-same words. This time, however, it added: 'What is more, Seth had no right to cut that tree down.'"

"Home repeated the message from first to last. Mr. Cheney seemed greatly perplexed. 'Certainly,' he said, 'this is very strange. My brother Seth did cut down a tree that rather obstructed the view from the old homestead; and we all said at the time that the one who claims to speak to you would not have

consented to his felling it had she been on earth. As for the rest of the message, it is sheer nonsense.’”

“Just before the party separated for the night, the message was again given, and again met by a point-blank contradiction. ‘I went to my room,’ writes Home, ‘feeling greatly depressed. It was the first time an untrue message had been received through me; and even were it correct, it astonished me that a liberated spirit should occupy itself with such a matter. I could not sleep for thinking of the occurrence.’”

“In the morning he made known to his host how much the matter had troubled him. ‘I am just as sorry about it,’ answered Mr. Cheney; and resumed, ‘I am now going to demonstrate to you that, if it were the spirit it purports to be, it is sadly mistaken. We will go together to the family vault, and you shall see for yourself that, even had we desired to do so, it would be impossible to place another coffin above hers.’”

“The two went at once to the burying-ground. The person who had the care of the vault was sent for, and its owner desired him to open it. As he placed the key in the lock, the man seemed to recollect something; and turning, said in a half-apologetic tone, ‘By the way, Mr. Cheney, as there was just a little room above the coffin of Mrs. —— (the old lady in the gray silk), I have placed the coffin of Mrs. L—’s baby there. I suppose it’s all right, but perhaps I ought to have asked you first about it. I only did it yesterday.’ Mr. Cheney turned on his companion a look that Home could never forget. ‘It’s all true, then; it’s all true!’ were the only words he could utter.”

“‘The same evening,’ he writes, ‘the spirit once more made known her presence. *Think not*, ran the message now delivered, *that I would care were a pyramid of coffins to be piled on mine. I was anxious to convince you of my identity, once and for ever*.’”

All the facts just quoted above are surrounded by the guarantees necessary to ensure their authenticity. The majority of them have been subjected to the most rigorous critical examination. I would have included many other similar cases if the framework of this book did not impose strict limitations of space.

In short, it can be said that proofs of survival abound for those who seek

them with a sincere heart, with intelligence and perseverance. Thus the notion of immortality emerges little by little from the shadows piled up by sophisms and negations, and the human soul affirms itself in its imperishable reality.

The infinite universe becomes our eternal homeland. A vast perspective of time unfolds before our eyes as the field of our labors, our studies, our progress. And once this certainty has penetrated our soul, no discouragement, no fear can reach us, either in this life or in the innumerable lifetimes which destiny compels us to traverse.

Part three

The ups and downs of mediumship

XXII

Mediumship practices and dangers

After long denying the reality of Spiritist phenomena, many opponents, overcome by the evidence, now change tactics and say: Yes, Spiritism is true, but its practice is full of dangers.

It cannot be denied that Spiritism presents pitfalls to imprudent individuals who, without preliminary studies, without any preparation, method, or effective protection, engage in researching the occult. By turning experiments into a playful game, a frivolous amusement, they draw to themselves the lower order elements of the unseen world, from which they will inevitably suffer influences.

However, these dangers have been greatly exaggerated. In all things there are precautions to be taken. Physics, chemistry and medicine also require prolonged study, and the ignorant persons wanting to handle chemical substances, explosives or toxic substances, will thereby risk their health and life. There is not one thing, depending on the use we make of it, that is good or bad for itself. It is unjust, in any case, to highlight the bad side of Spiritist practices without pointing out the benefits derived from it, which far outweigh abuses and disappointments.

No progress, no discovery is ever achieved without risks. If one had refused, since the beginning of time, to venture on the ocean because of navigation perils, what would have happened as a result? Humanity, fragmented into various families, would have confined itself to their continents and would have lost all the benefits that derive from travels and exchanges. The invisible world is also a vast and deep ocean strewn with reefs but full of riches and life. Behind the veil of the Hereafter there are the innumerable crowds that we have an interest in knowing, for they are the repositories of the secret of our own future. Hence the necessity of studying and exploring this unseen world, putting to good use the forces and inexhaustible resources it contains; resources next to which those found on Earth will one day appear to be very limited.

Moreover, even if we were to lose interest in the invisible world, the latter

would not lose interest in us as a result. Its action on humanity is constant. We are subject to its influences and suggestions. To want to ignore it is to remain defenseless before it; whereas, through a methodical study, we learn to draw to ourselves the beneficent forces contained in it; we learn to ward off evil influences, to react against them through willpower and prayer. It all depends on the way we use our mental forces and the direction we focus them. And how many evils there are, whose cause escape us, because we insist on ignoring these things; and yet they could be averted through a conscientious and thorough study of the world of the spirits!

Most of the neurotic and mentally ill patients, being treated without success by official medicine, are no more than obsessed individuals capable of being cured by spiritual and magnetic practices.[347]

God placed humans in the midst of an ocean of life, an inexhaustible reservoir of forces and powers. And he has given us intelligence, reason and conscience, so that we get to know these forces, and learn to conquer and use them. It is by this constant exercise that we will develop ourselves and succeed in establishing our empire over nature, the domination of thought over matter, the reign of the spirit over the world.

It is the highest goal that we can set for our lives. Instead of turning it away from human essence, let us make our goal to pursue it without hesitation. Let us study the universe in all its aspects, in all its forms. Knowledge is the supreme good, and all evils come from ignorance.

The difficulties of experimentation arise from the fact that, generally speaking, our contemporaries have no notion of psychical laws, besides being incapable of studying them fruitfully, due to their mindsets which result from a bad education. With their prejudices, their presumption, and their skepticism, they cause all favorable influences to distance from them.

Under such conditions, Spiritism experiments may be full of pitfalls; and much more so for the mediums than for mere observers. Mediums are nervous, sensitive, impressionable beings; they need to feel enveloped in an atmosphere of peace, calm, and kindness, which the presence of advanced spirits alone can create. A prolonged fluidic action of lower order spirits may prove fatal to them, ruin their health by provoking phenomena of obsession

and possession already discussed above. Numerous cases of this kind were studied and reported by Allan Kardec.[348] After him, Eugène Nus related others.[349] I will cite a few of the more recent ones. Of these, some go so far as madness. These have been used to argue against Spiritism. In reality, such cases simply stem from the experimenters' levity and lack of precaution, and prove nothing against the tenet itself. Everywhere, Spiritism places the remedy beside the evil.

As stressed before, one must be surrounded with precautions when practicing mediumship. The routes traced by Spiritism between the occult world and ours can also be used as a means of invasion by perverse souls which float in our atmosphere, if we do not know how to oppose them with a vigilant guard always in attendance. Many tender and sensitive souls incarnated on Earth have suffered from their interchange with these evil spirits, whose desires, appetites, and regrets, they are constantly bringing back to us.

Lofty souls, through their counsels, know how to safeguard us from abuses and dangers, and guide us in the ways of wisdom. But their protection will not suffice if we do not make an effort to improve ourselves. It is humans' destiny to develop their own strength, to build their own intelligence, awareness and conscience. We must know how to attain a moral state which wards off from us all inferior individualities. Without this, the presence of our guides will be impotent to save us. On the contrary, the light they make around us will draw the spirits of the abyss, as a lamp lighted in the midst of night attracts moths, nocturnal birds, all winged inhabitants of the shadows.

I mentioned obsessions; here are some examples:

The Italian medium Filippo Randone,[350] of Rome, is the victim of the evil deeds of a spirit designated by the name *Uomo-fui*, which tried several times to smother him at night under a pyramid of furniture which it enjoys piling up on his bed. In full seance, the spirit violently seizes Randone and throws him to the ground, at the risk of killing him. Hitherto, it has not been possible to rid the medium of this dangerous host.

On the other hand, the Spanish periodical *Luz y Unión* (December 1902), of Barcelona, reports that an unfortunate mother, driven to crime against her husband and her children by an occult influence, and subject to bouts of fury against which ordinary means were powerless, was cured in two months as a result of the evocation and conversion of the obsessor, through persuasion

and prayer. It is certain that similar results would have been obtained in many other cases by using same processes.

Most spirits intervening in haunting phenomena can also be classed as being obsessors.

The revenant of Valence-en-Brie (France, 1896), which was throwing furniture about in Mr. Lebègue's house, and whose voice was heard from the cellar to the attic, insulting the house dwellers, expanding in rude words and low profanities, as is typical of these lower order manifestations.

The German journal *Psychische Studien* of August 1891 reports a similar case. A poor woman from Göppingen, aged 50, was haunted by her husband's spirit, who, having abandoned her to go to America with another woman, had killed his mistress and committed suicide. His spirit produced continual and varied sounds in his widow's room, and deprived the neighboring tenants of sleep. She recognized him by the voice. She had to change her domicile several times, but in vain. The spirit followed her everywhere. He slipped into her bed at night, pushed her violently and pulled her hair. Once he burned her so hard that she bore the mark for a fortnight.

These evil spirits are in general only ignorant, and can be brought back to the path of good if we use gentleness, patience, and persuasion. Yet there are also wicked, hardened, and even formidable ones that cannot be braved with impunity, unless you are armed with will, faith, and moral qualities. It never hurts to repeat: the law of correspondences regulates all things in the domain of the unseen. Our contacts with the world beyond vary infinitely, depending on the nature of our thoughts and our fluids. These are powerful magnets for good or for evil. Through them we can associate ourselves with what is best or worst in the Hereafter, and provoke around us the most sublime manifestations, or the most repugnant phenomena.

Two interesting cases of obsession, which could be stopped by various methods, are recounted below. *Les Annales des Sciences Psychiques* of January 1911, report the following facts, attested by Mr. E. Magnin, professor at the School of Magnetism:[351]

"Mme. G., aged 28 years, was attacked by a malady of the head, of neurasthenic origin, to which for several years an obsession of suicide had adhered. Having been treated by several physicians, who recognized the integrity of her organs, she was referred to me by one of them."

"If there were no physical defects, the psychic side, on the contrary, left

much to be desired, the patient being emotional, whimsical, and very suggestionable. She complained of maddening pain in the nape of the neck, with a feeling of weight, at times intolerable, on the shoulders; on these occasions she felt an almost irresistible desire to destroy herself."

"In the course o f a long interrogation the patient confided to me that before her marriage she had been courted by a foreign officer, whom she loved, but whom her parents would not permit her to espouse. He had then taken service in the Foreign Legion and had since died. A short time afterwards this obsession of making an end of her life had taken hold of her. There resided, without doubt, the origin of this obsessing idea, and a psychotherapeutic treatment seemed to be indicated. Several sittings in the waking state gave no success, and attempts with hypnotic sleep were no happier ..."

"Without the knowledge of the patient, but with the consent of her husband, I decided to seek the assistance of this clairvoyant. I took the precautions necessary in such case. I did not say a word about the situation to the medium, and took her into the presence of the patient only after having put the latter to sleep. I warned her that I should not put any question to her, and that she should only have to tell me, as simply as possible, what her gifts of psychic vision permitted her to see."

"She had hardly been introduced to the patient, who was in a deep sleep, than she described to me a being who appeared 'gripped' to the back of the sufferer. Without allowing her to perceive my astonishment and the great interest which this vision presented, I requested the medium to indicate the exact position of this invisible being to my eyes. 'With his right hand he compresses the neck of this woman, and with his left he hides or indicates his own brow,' she told me. Then, choking with emotion, she cried: 'He committed suicide, and wants her to rejoin him.'"

"At my request she described the physiognomy, the expression ('a very strange look,' she said), and even the character of the being that she declared she saw ..."

They both talked with this being.

"This conversation was long and painful; the replies denoted a violent, passionate, and obstinate nature. Also, ... I could not prevent myself from expressing a real feeling of consolation on learning from the medium that my arguments had convinced the persecutor, and that, seized with pity, he

promised to abandon his work of destruction and leave his victim in peace."

"I only awakened the patient two hours after the departure of the medium, and she has thus been ignorant of her existence. I did not tell her a word of the immense interest which this experiment had presented, and of which she had moreover, always to remain ignorant. On leaving me she said: 'I feel very much easier today.'"

"On the next day but one she came again at my appointment. She was transformed. Her expression, her bearing and her dress all denoted a turn in her thoughts. She assured me that her normal mood, her gaiety, her taste for the Arts had returned in the course of a day. AS for her husband, he scarcely recognized her, the change had been so sudden."

"Since this proceeding, so fertile in results, Mme. G. has never again felt the pain in the neck, nor the physical sensation of weight on the shoulder, nor the psychic obsession of suicide. Her health was in all respects perfect ..."

"A discreet inquiry, conducted solely in the interests of science apprised me that this officer had not died of an infectious fever, as was said by his connections, but that he had really committed suicide by a bullet in the head. I have not been able to ascertain with precision which side the bullet had entered. His character was absolutely what the medium had described, and his strange look was explained by a very slight squint."

In the Italian journal *Luce e Ombra* of January 1905, Enrico Carreras reports on the struggles for influence which occurred during the sittings given by the medium Politi, between the protective spirit Ranuzzi and the mediumistic personality Spavento:

"I remember one evening, in the midst of obscurity, finding myself alone in front of him because my two study companions had fled, I had to fight against the medium, who Spavento had seized; a bitter struggle, in which I had to gather all my strength."

"I wanted to say all this in order to show the novices that Spiritism is not something to be taken jokingly because it can have serious consequences; and also to show the teachers of the Materialistic school, how far from the inoffensive *secondary personalities* of Binet and P. Janet are these mediumistic or, more properly speaking, Spiritist personalities, which able to produce the phenomena mentioned above, without counting so many others, such as the repeated howling of animals heard up to the street, the shrill whistles, the violent explosions which occurred in an uninhabited house next

to ours, and so on."

"We had adopted this system with the assiduous collaboration of Ranuzzi, [a spirit] that endeavored to calm Spavento on the one hand, while supporting the medium on the other, by materializing in his room at night, and addressing him words of encouragement, advising him, transmitting good fluids to him. This tactic, we say, did not take long to produce good results."

"Little by little, Spavento changed, both in his physical manifestations and in his morals. He abandoned his first name to take that of Caesar's and became, to our great satisfaction, one of our dearest invisible friends. Perhaps I shall soon have the opportunity of showing my faithful readers how this slow transformation took place, which has cost us so much trouble, but for which we have been greatly rewarded."

By what means can we preserve the mediums from the perils of obsession? By surrounding them with an atmosphere of peace, of intern retreat and moral security; and by forming bundle of magnetic forces through the union of the wills. The medium must feel supported, protected. We must not neglect prayer. Thoughts are forces, all the more powerful if they are purer and higher. Prayer, aided by uniting our wills, opposes an impenetrable fluidic barrier to lower entities. The mediums, on the other hand, must resist by thought and will any attempt at obsession and free themselves from any suspicious domination. It is easier to prevent than to cure. The cases of incorporation, especially, present many dangers. Thus the medium must abandon its body to other souls only under supervision and control pf an enlightened spirit guide.

It is an error and an abuse to believe that the medium must always be passive and subject unconditionally to ambient influences. The medium is not a servile subject, like those sensitive patients who were subject to the experiences of certain specialists: it rather is a missionary, whose consciousness and will must never be annihilated, but exercised wisely, after careful examination, before being lent to the occult direction imparted to it. When the influences felt seem bad to the medium and degenerate into obsession, he or she must not hesitate to change the milieu, or at least to remove from it those persons who seem to favor or attract such influences.

By removing the causes of obsession, the causes of illness will be removed at the same time. It is the impure fluids that alter the mediums' heath, disturbing and diminishing their most beautiful faculties.

In incorporation phenomena, human magnetism is often abused. The fluidic action of a person of good, with pure manners and high thoughts, can alone be accepted. The medium, in all circumstances, must place himself or herself under the protection of their spirit guide, which, if elevated and vigorous, will be able to remove from the medium all the troubling elements, all causes of suffering. All in all, evil spirits can only act upon us insofar as we allow them to take hold of us. When reason is right, the heart pure, the will firm, their efforts are in vain.

An effective hidden protection, as said before, is the essential condition for success in the field of experimentation. No group can do without it. The facts prove it, and all the mediums who have published their impressions, their memories, bear witness to it.

Madame d'Espérance dedicates her book *Shadow Land* or *Light from the Other Side* [352] to her spirit guide, Hummur Stafford, "whose guiding – though unseen – hand and wise counsels, have here my mainstay and support on the voyage of life ..."

Mrs. Piper, weakened and made ill by the contact of lower order spirits, owed her recovery and the proper direction of her labors to the firm and vigorous intervention of the spirits Imperator, Doctor, and Rector. Thanks to them, the experiments, confused as they were, became immediately clear, precise and convincing.[353]

Examples like these could be multiplied. Allan Kardec has constituted the Spiritist science and philosophy with the help of revelations emanating from higher order spirits. In our own group it was thanks to the influence of higher order spirits that we obtained the beautiful phenomena described above. It was only, it is true, after a long period of waiting and persevering trials, that this assistance was granted to us. In this order of facts, one obtains what one has deserved by a long tested patience and an absolute disinterestedness. In experimentation, we find ourselves in the presence of foreign intelligences, of wills which often take precedence over ours and care little for our demands and caprices. They read inside us, and we must know how to gain their confidence and support through noble intentions and generous motives.

This protection, which hovered upon our group, and persisted as long as

we remained united in thought and intention, I also have found in the course of my career as a lecturer, and I am happy to testify here, thanking with a sincere and affectionate heart, those noble friends of the spiritual plane, whose assistance has been so precious to me in difficult times.

More than once, when faced with a skeptical, even hostile, public and dealing with controversial subjects in front of crowded rooms, I found myself in the most unfavorable physical conditions. And every time too, at my urgent call, my invisible guides came to restore me the forces necessary for the accomplishment of my task.

The protection of a serious, powerful, enlightened guide is necessary in the seances. When the guide is insufficient, the difficulties multiply and mystifications abound. Irresponsible spirits mingle with spirits of our family, whose manifestations they disturb. Trespassers, of a revolting obscenity, sometimes slip into the sittings. Professor Falcomer, in his "Phénoménographie,"[354] speaks of a case in which "Pious manifestations were succeeded by very impious language, dictated by the raps of the table, and addressed to three ladies and a young girl. This language was that of an impudent and ugly being, and one cannot transcribe it. The professor's mother and the other assistants were deeply disgusted."

The action of malignant and degraded spirits does not only cast ridicule and discredit upon our cause, by removing from it scrupulous and well educated persons; it can also push mediums to deceit and in the long run ruins their judgment and their dignity. We begin by laughing and amusing ourselves with the cynical or absurd answers of these spirits, but by this very fact they are attracted. Then these inconvenient visitors, to which you open your door, will return, become attached to you, and sometimes turn into formidable obsessors.

Spiritism, regarded as dangerous by some and as puerile and vulgar by others, is hardly known to the masses except in its inferior aspects. It is the most material phenomena that attract most attention and cause unfavorable judgments. This state of things is due to theorists and popularizers who, seeing in Spiritism a purely experimental science, neglect or systematically dismiss, sometimes with disdain, the means of training and of mental

elevation indispensable to produce really impressive manifestations. The considerable differences between the vibrational psychical state of the experimenters and that of spirits capable of producing far-reaching phenomena are not sufficiently taken into account, and nothing is done to attenuate such differences. Hence the shortage of high-level manifestations in comparison with the abundance of vulgar facts.

The result is that many critics, who know nothing of the subject but its down-to-earth side, accuse us daily of edifying on petty facts a doctrine full of magnitude. Should they be more familiar with the transcendental side of Spiritism, they would recognize that we have not exaggerated anything. On the contrary, we have remained rather below the truth.

Whatever the repugnance maintained by positivist and “antimystic” theorists, due account should be given to indications given by competent men, without which Spiritism would seem a poor science, full of obscurities and perils for researchers.

The love of science is not enough, said Professor Falcomer; the science of love is still necessary. In phenomena we not only deal with physical elements, but with spiritual agents, with moral beings, who, like us, think, love, and suffer. In the invisible depths, the immense hierarchy of souls ranges from the most obscure to the most radiant. It depends on us to attract some and to dismiss others.

The only way is to create inside ourselves, through our thoughts and actions, a radiating focus of purity and light. All communion is a work of thought. This is the very essence of spiritual life; it is a force which vibrates with increasing intensity, as the soul rises from its lower being to pure spirit, and from pure spirit to God.

Thought vibrations propagate through space, drawing to us similar thoughts and vibrations. If we understood the nature and extent of this force, we would have only lofty and noble thoughts. But humans are still ignorant of themselves, as they are ignorant of the immense resources of the creative and fruitful faculties which lie dormant in them, and by the aid of which this world could be renewed.

In our unawareness and weakness, we often attract evil beings whose suggestions trouble us. Thus spiritual communion is altered, obscured by the fact of our inferiority; poisonous fluids spread over the Earth, and the struggle between good and evil takes place in the hidden world as it does in

the material world.

In the attraction of thoughts and souls lies the whole law of psychic manifestations. All is affinity and analogy in the invisible. Researchers, who seek out the secret of darkness, raise up your thoughts so that you may attract to you the inspiring spirits and the forces of good and beauty. Raise them not only during the hours of study and experience, but frequently, at any hour of the day, as a salutary and regenerative exercise. Do not forget that it is these thoughts that slowly refine and purify our being, expand our faculties, make us capable of feeling the delicate sensations which are the sources of our future felicities.

The problem of mediumship has remained obscure and misunderstood for most psychologists and theologians of our time. The past possessed more brilliant lights on this subject, and even in the Middle Ages, some people, heirs of ancient wisdom, saw right into this question. In the twelfth century, Maimonides, the learned Jewish rabbi of Cordova, a pupil of Averrhoes, inspired by the doctrines of the Kabbalah, summed up the law of mediumship in these terms:

“The Spirit hovers over humanity until he finds the place of his dwelling. All nature is not good to him; His light is at ease only in wise, healthy men, enlightened among his fellows. Anyone who aspires to the honors of sublime commerce must apply himself to perfecting his nature within and without. A lover of solitude will carried away the sacred books, prolong his meditations and his vigils, fill his soul with knowledge and virtue. His meals are regulated; his food, his drinks, chosen so that in his healthy body and his flesh renewed, in time there will be a generous blood. Then everything is ready: the strong, the learned, the wise will be prophets or seers, as soon as the Spirit meets them on their way.”[355]

Humans therefore have complicated preparations to undergo and a rule of conduct to observe in order to develop the precious gift of mediumship. This requires the simultaneous cultivation of intelligence, soul, and body. We need science, meditation, inner retreat, detachment of human things. The inspiring spirit hates noise: “God is not in the earthquake,” says the Scriptures (1Kgs 19:11). And an Arab proverb repeats: “Noise is to humans; silence is to

God.”

“We must perfect ourselves within and without,” says the Jewish scholar. Indeed, vulgar associations are harmful to mediumship, because of the impure fluids that emanate from vicious people and attach themselves to ours to neutralize the latter. We must also watch over our body: *Mens sana in corpore sano* (A sound mind in a sound body). The carnal passions attract spirits of lust; the medium which devotes itself to it debases its power and ends by losing it. Nothing weakens the high faculties, as abandoning ourselves to sensual love; it irritates the body and disturbs the limpid sources of inspiration. Just as the purest and deepest lake, when agitated by the storm, stirs up the silt on the bottom, and raises it to the surface, it ceases to reflect the azure of the sky and the splendor of the stars; thus the soul of the medium, disturbed by impure movements, becomes incapable of reproducing the visions of the Hereafter.

There is in the innermost depths, in the ignored recesses of all consciousness, a mysterious point by which each of us are confined to the invisible, the divine. It is this point which must be discovered, enlarged, dilated. It is this background consciousness which awakens in trance, like a sleeping world, and delivers the secret of the previous lives of the soul. It is the great law of spiritualist psychology, uniting and conciliating in the mediumistic phenomenon the action of the spirit and the freedom of humans; it is the mysterious kiss resulting from the fusion of two worlds in this fragile and fugitive being that we are; it is one of the most noble privileges, one of the most real grandeurs of our nature.

High mediumship entails great duties and responsibilities. “Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.” (Lk 12:48) A medium is one of those. Their share of certainty is greater than that of other humans, since they live by anticipation in the domain of the invisible, to which an increasingly close bond attaches them. A wise exercise of their faculties elevates them to the luminous spheres of the Hereafter and prepares them for their future place. From the physical point of view, this exercise is no less salutary. Mediums are retempered, bathed in an ocean of magnetic emanations that give them strength and power.

On the other hand, they have imperious duties to fulfill and must not forget that their powers were not granted to them for themselves, but for the good of their fellow beings and at the service of truth. It is one of the noblest

tasks that can befall a soul in this world. To accomplish it, the medium must accept all trials, know how to forgive all offenses, forget all insults. His or her destiny might be painful, perhaps, but it is the most beautiful, for it leads the heights of spirituality. On the long road of history, the lives of the greatest mediums and prophets have given us an example of abnegation and sacrifice.

XXIII
Hypotheses and objections

In Spiritism, conflicting theories and objections abound. For the most part, we reviewed them in this study. We have seen, for example, that the theory of hallucinations can no longer stand upright after the photographic apparitions, the casting molds, the writing phenomena and the signatures of the deceased recognized as authentic. The theory of subconsciousness, also called subconscious or subliminal consciousness, has been refuted in chapters XVIII and XIX above, concerning mediumistic writing and “incorporations” (psychophonies). It is true that it is also applied to phenomena of the table, notably regarding the facts of typology obtained by Victor Hugo, and which we have reported in Chapter XVII. Many critics refuse to see in verses dictated by the table anything other than the unconscious work of the great poet. These verses, they say, are of the same form as his own; the same powerful breath animates them.

The analysis of the facts demonstrates the inadequacy of this explanation. Victor Hugo never took a seat at the table. He declared that he could not improvise in verse, when the spirits asked him to be interrogated in this way; and answered in the same way, immediately, without seeking or hesitation. When one day, yielding to their desire, he prepared in advance a question addressed to the spirit of Molière, the latter was silent; it was “the Shadow of the Sepulcher” which answered in bitter terms instead, which constituted a sharp lesson to the poet, which made him leave the room, indignant at the nonchalance of the spirits.

Could Victor Hugo be conscious and unconscious at the same time, and act outside himself without knowing and unwittingly? The unconscious, which is ignorant, cannot be a motive for action. Now, all Spiritism phenomena are forms of activity, regulated by consciousness. The latter cannot group in it two opposing principles, action and inaction. To pretend otherwise would be to fall into the absurd!

The same occurred with the other sitters. None of them dreamed of causing sleep and, consequently, am out-of-body experience. No one foresaw

the responses of the table. They all waited anxiously for the phrases it was about to dictate. They counted on Moliere, whom Victor Hugo had just questioned. If the unconscious of the poet, under the influence of this expectation, had come into play, it would the answer of the great satyric that would have come. Now, as I have said, it was “the Shadow of the Sepulcher” which instead manifested itself in a language so bitter and solemn, in contemptuous terms, that Victor Hugo, in his pride, would certainly never dream of – least of all in front of witnesses.

The mysterious spirit does not express itself only in verse. Its prose is also magnificent and severe, as may be judged from this fragment, dictated by the table at another seance:[356]

“Imprudent, you say: the shadow of the sepulcher speaks human language, it uses words, figures, metaphors, falsehoods to tell the truth. The shadow of the sepulcher is not a masquerade, you are right, I am a reality. If I go down to your level and speak your jargon, it is because you are limited. The word is the chain that grips the mind; the image is the yoke of thought; your tongue is but a sound connected to a dictionary; my language belongs to me, it is immensity, it is the ocean, it is like a hurricane. My library contains millions of stars, millions of planets, millions of constellations. The infinite is the supreme book and God is its eternal reader. Now, if you want me to speak to you in my language, go up on Sinai, and you will hear me in the lightning; go up on Calvary and you will see me in the rays; go down into your tomb and you will feel me in my clemency.”

Moreover, here is a fact that demonstrates how the theory of subconsciousness is impotent to explain the phenomena obtained with Victor Hugo:

Le Gaulois of January 10, 1906, under the title “Journal d’un vaudevilliste,” published a fragment of the memoirs of E. Blum, containing the following anecdote:

“Victor Hugo confessed that he firmly believed in Spiritism and believed in it until his death. His two sons, as well as his two great friends, Auguste Vacquerie and Paul Meurice, also believed in it. Vacquerie told me something extraordinary.”

“One winter evening in Guernsey (near Jersey island, English Channel), the tables were turned. The great poet, his two children, and Vacquerie were present. It was Charles Hugo who acted as a medium, he questioned the table

and said what it replied. Suddenly he uttered a little cry of painful surprise. ‘Oh!’ said he,’the spirits are telling me a very frightful news: Madame de Girardin has just died.’ We looked at the time, it was ten o’clock.”

“Madame de Girardin had just written that very morning that she intended to spend a few days in Guernsey with her great friend Hugo, and was expected. The next day a letter arrived, announcing that Madame de Girardin had died. No one could have known this in Guernsey, where there was not still a telegraph.”

“Charles Hugo was totally unaware of it, like the rest, and, curiously enough, Madame de Girardin had indeed died the day before at ten o’clock! This story always made me shiver, for it was difficult to doubt its veracity, with such witnesses.”

The theory of subconscious must be taken seriously, as it helps shed light on a large number of psychical cases. It has advanced the science of the beings by learning to know the hidden sides of our nature. It made it easier and more precise to classify the facts. However, it is applicable only to certain phenomena of animism, that is to say, to the exteriorization of the living; for example to cases of renovation of the memory. It cannot explain physical and intellectual facts, which constitute pure Spiritualism. The intervention of the deceased is the simplest, the most logical solution, the one that best adapts to all of these facts. The entities who manifest themselves give no other explanation, and their testimony is universal. It is not even the errors they sometimes commit that should not represent elements of certainty, for what does not exist cannot leave a subconscious trace and be known to the medium or the sitters.

F. W. H. Myers, in his fine book *Human Personality* (London, 1903) gave a masterful definition of subconsciousness; but after him many scholars have abused this theory by extending it to facts to which it is wholly foreign. In the impossibility of explaining the Spiritist phenomena, they have resorted to hypotheses which adapt very badly to the reality of things.

The recent book of T. Flournoy, *Esprits et Médiums* [*Spirits and Mediums*] is very characteristic in this respect. The author groups hundreds of facts gathered during an investigation. The explanations he gives are of astonishing weakness, and leave intact the Spiritist interpretation which he pretended to ruin. His bias is evident, especially when he tries to list among phenomena of the unconscious a vulgar case of plagiarism.[357]

The case of Buscarlet (op. cit., p. 359) may also be cited. A lady with that name dreams, in Paris, on December 10, 1883, that Mrs. Nitchinof, an inhabitant of Kasan (Russia), must leave the Institute on the 17th with certain details which evoke the idea of death. She writes, to share this dream, to Mrs. Moratief also living in Kasan. The latter replied that this person had actually left the Institute on the 17th, but in the state of a corpse, having been carried away by diphtheria in three days. Mr. Flournoy sees in this a remarkable case of telepathy among three people!

Mrs. Moratief, being related to each of the other two people who knew little of each other, had supposedly, subconsciously perceived on the 10th the first symptoms of Mrs. Nitchinoff's illness and unwittingly transmitted this knowledge to Mrs. Buscarlet! This is an example of Mr. Flournoy's explanations!

If such a hypothesis is inadmissible, what explanation can there be, whether by telepathy or subconsciousness, of Case no. 15 in which Mlle. Sophie S., expected to join the Pastor H— in the Mayens-de-Riddes (Switzerland), to make excursions with him and his boarders, received, ten days before the catastrophe which cost the life of the pastor and one of his pupils, the following advice: "Sophie must not go to the Mayens, she would risk her life there." Or the explanation of Case no. 28 (prediction of death as a result of a bicycle fall, a few weeks in advance).

Besides, it is easy to find in this collection, in which so many persons, in good faith, have communicated the most remarkable facts of their experiments, many phenomena of which Mr. Flournoy does not even attempt to give an explanation. For example, Case no. 267 (communication announcing the assassination of Sadi Carnot before it was known). Case no. 190, where the announcement of a change in a travel program is followed closely by the arrival of a letter informing of an unexpected illness that upsets all plans of the trip. Case no. 191, where the wording of a postcard that nobody had read before was obtained. Case no. 367, where reference is made, outside the presence of the person concerned, to intimate facts known only to her and her deceased husband.

Case no. 322 is also inexplicable by the processes so dear to Mr. Flournoy. The narrator one day received a communication from Mr. Martinol, who had died in Australia at the moment when he was embarking to return to Europe. "This man, whose existence I did not know," she said, "made me a

deplorable confession, which he charged me to send to his wife. It was not long since I had written it, when, not knowing her, I refrained from sending it. Seeing that I was not going to do it, the same Martinol communicated himself with my friend, Mrs. H. in a still more powerful manner. She knew Mrs. Martinol and went to see her with the two messages. Everything was true, and the two confessions gave the key to acts incomprehensible until then to the family."

In addition, Flournoy's tactic consists in drowning, under a flood of technical and pedantic terms, the evidential elements emerging from experimentation: *cryptomnesia*, *underlying emotional complexus*, *hypnoid layers*, and so on. It is by this means that science has always obscured the first truths and the great problems of life and destiny. From this aspect, it is no less responsible than religious orthodoxy for the unfortunate state of mind of present times and the formidable consequences that result from it. After centuries of religious domination and scientific work, humankind is still seeking its way, which Spiritism has clearly traced.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that M. Flournoy brought perfect courtesy in his judgments. Its moderate terms, the talent of observation and analysis which he displays in all circumstances, make him eminently sympathetic. At times even, he seems to tip towards Spiritist data. In this way, he let escape this admission: "It may be that in this number of facts there are genuine ones, that is to say, actually having a spiritual origin, but I do not undertake their sorting." We feel by this that he is restrained by considerations of a personal nature. His book will have the immense advantage of attracting many scholars to our studies, for the author often insists on the duty of intellectuals and scientists to probe the manifold problems of psychical experimentation.

I have already indicated the real dangers of the practice of mediumship. There are some imaginary ones, invented at pleasure, and signalized with great noise by the adversaries of Spiritism. They have given rise to two other theories, which we shall examine in turn, that of larvae or elementals, and that of demons.

Spiritual manifestations, according to some Catholic journals published

daily,[358] regardless they are the result of conscious or unconscious action of the medium or the sitters, are always the work of the devil.

Here we find the usual argument of the Church, the principal instrument of its reign, which enables it to resist all innovations, keep the flock of the faithful under terror, and ensures its dominion over the centuries.

Even when the spirits speak to us of God, of prayer, of virtue, of sacrifice, we must see there the intervention of the devil, say the theologians; for Satan, the father of lies, knows how to take all forms, speak all languages to furnish all proofs. And when we think ourselves in presence of the souls of our relatives, of our friends, of a wife, of a deceased child, it is still the great impostor who disguises himself in order to abuse us.

We have seen, they say, the spirit of evil taking on the most deceptive appearances, and even that of the Virgin and the saints, in order to deceive the believers. This is what Canon Brettes asserts in *La Revue du Monde Invisible* of February 15, 1902, after a study by Mgr. Méric on the materialization of phantoms.

"The results," he says, "seem to me to conclude in favor of the opinion that everything is diabolical in the apparitions of Tilly (France). If these deductions are true, it is the devil who presents himself there in the apparent form of the Blessed Virgin, and who receives the homage which is addressed to the mother of God."

Other critics point out that in their relations with the invisible world, humans communicate not only with the souls of the dead, but also with mere appearances of souls, with larvae, fluidic forms animated by a sort of dying vibration of the thought of the deceased. On the other hand, humans are guilty, they say, as it is almost sacrilegious to evoke the souls of the dead, because when they leave the earth, they reach the higher regions, and the return here is a constraint, causing suffering for them. "The Spiritist method," says a distinguished Theosophist, "has the great inconvenience of being prejudicial to the dead, of which it hinders the evolution."

We have seen, by numerous examples and proofs of identity, that the hypothesis of the larvae is by no means justified. The facts show, on the contrary, that we are dealing with the souls of humans who have lived on Earth. They are essentially human in character. The action of the communicating spirits is human; they use human language, writing, and drawing. Their intellectual phenomena are imbued with ideas, feelings,

emotions, in a word, everything that constitutes the fabric of our own existence. Their communications can be of all degrees, from the trivial to the sublime, but it is also what characterizes the human environment. The forms of the materialized phantoms, the photographs are those of beings similar to us and never those of demons, larvae or elementals. Add to this all the positive facts and details that demonstrated that the communicating spirits lived among human generations, and you will come to the certainty that the role ascribed to demons and larvae in the Spiritist phenomena is nothing but the product of a disordered imagination.

As for the second objection, it has no more substance. How could it be guilty, this communion of Heaven and Earth, from which the human soul comes enlightened, strengthened, enraptured by all the exhortations, by all the inspirations that come from above? The Spiritist practices have comforted, lifting many beings bent under the test of separation. They have restored peace to the afflicted by proving to them that those whom they believed to be lost are only hidden for a time in their eyes. And what a moral influence on our whole life, in the thought that loved ones, invisible beings follow us and observe us, weigh and judge our actions, that our beloved are often near us, associating ourselves with our efforts towards good; smiling at our joys, at our progress, growing sad at our failings, sustaining us in difficult times! Who, having lost a beloved being, can remain indifferent to such a thought?

Far from hindering the evolution of discarnate souls, we know, on the contrary, that our evocations in many cases favor it. Moreover, these are not imperious evocations, as one would like to insinuate. Spirits are free and respond as they please. Besides, what is an evocation when taken in itself? It is the feeble human speech trying to stutter in the sublime language of thought; it is the stammering of the soul which enters the universal and divine communion!

Experience proves it every day: Thanks to the advice of humans, many obscure and backward souls have been able to recognize and orient themselves in their new life. Most materialists go through the phenomenon of death without realizing it. They believe they still live on earthly life long after their death. The elevated spirits are without action upon them, owing to differences in fluidic density; while the calls, warnings and explanations they receive from mediumistic groups tear them away from their torpor, their state

of unconsciousness, and facilitate their growth, instead of hindering it. For us, as for the deceased, the communion of the two humanities is salutary, when it is carried out under serious conditions. It is a mutual teaching given by the advanced spirits of the two circles, endeavoring to enlighten, console, and moralize the suffering or less advanced souls of both planes. The theories of the Theosophists and Occultists, so righteous with regard to the law of Karma or reincarnations, are utterly deficient in the point at hand. By diverting the researcher from the experimental method to confining it in the domain of pure metaphysics, they would suppress the only positive basis of all true philosophy.

It is thanks to experimental proofs that immortality; hitherto purely a concept, a vague hope of the human mind; becomes a living reality. And through it, many skeptical and disenchanted souls feel revived at the sight of the destinies open to them. Instead of depreciating them, let us know how to do justice to those Spiritist practices which have dried so many tears, soothed so many sorrows, emitted so many rays into the night of intelligent beings.

Let us go back to the demon theory and consider one thing. If the evil spirit, as the theologians claim, has the facility of reproducing all forms and figures, of revealing hidden things, of holding the most sublime discourses; if he teaches us good, charity, love, we can also attribute to him the apparitions mentioned in the holy books, to believe that it was he who spoke to Moses, to the other prophets and even to Jesus, and that all the hidden spiritual action is his work. The devil, knowing and capable of everything, even to the point of being wise and virtuous, may very well have taken the role of religious guide and, under the cover of the Church, lead us to our ruin. Indeed, history shows us, with an irresistible logic, that the Church has not always been inspired by God. In many circumstances its actions have been in complete contradiction with the attributes in which we are pleased to array the divinity. The Church is a gigantic tree whose fruits have not always been the best, and the devil, since he is skillful, has very well been able to lodge under its shadow.

If we were to admit, with theologians, that God has permitted, at all times and places, the most odious tricks, the world would appear to us as an

immense imposture, and we shall have no guarantee of not being deceived, both by the Church and by Spiritualism. The Church recognizes, and possesses only one criterion of purely moral certainty, as regards what it calls the “diabolical or divine supernatural.” Henceforth, with such limited bases of appreciation, given the talent of imitation which it lends to the enemy of mankind, what credit can we give to itself in all matters? Thus the argument of the devil, like a two-edged sword, can turn against those who have forged it!

We can ask ourselves if there really would be so much skill on the part of the devil to act as our opponents claim. In spiritual seances we would find him convincing materialists of the survival of the soul and of the responsibility for one’s acts, taking doubts away from skeptics, from negating and all its consequences, telling some hard truths, forcing them to return to themselves and turn toward the good. Where, then, would Satan have the advantage in all this? Would not the role of the spirit of darkness, on the contrary, be to encourage the materialists, the atheists, the skeptics, and the sensualists in their views?

It is truly puerile to ascribe to the devil the moral teachings which the high spirits lavish upon us. To believe that Satan is endeavoring to turn humans away from evil, whereas, by letting them slide down the slope of their passions, they would inevitably become Satan’s prey. To believe that he can learn to love, to pray, to serve God, even to dictate prayers to humans, is to attribute to him a role too ridiculous and awkward.

If the devil is so clever, can we ascribe to him the naive, coarse, and unintelligent answers obtained in environments where people experiment dealing with pure nonsense? And the obscene manifestations! Are they not made rather to divert us from Spiritualism than to draw us to him? While admitting the intervention of spirits of all kinds, from the lowest to the highest, types everything is explained rationally. Evil spirits are not of a diabolical nature, but merely of a human nature.

Are not there perverse souls on Earth, incarnated among us, who might be regarded as demons? When they return to the spiritual plane, these souls continue the same role, until they are regenerated through trials and subdued by suffering. It is up to wise investigators to be on guard against these sinister beings and to react against their influence.

In most circles of experimentation, instead of behaving with prudence and

respect, people have lost interest in the advice of those who have preceded them in the course of researches. By abusive demands and improper manners, harmonic influences are removed, perverse individualities and backward spirits are attracted to the experimenters. Hence so many disappointments, inconsistencies, and obsessions, which have led to the belief in the existence of demons, and have cast ridicule and discredit upon certain low-level Spiritism.

In short, the theory of the demon is neither positive nor scientific. It is a convenient argument, lending itself to all explanations, making it possible to reject all the proofs, all the cases of identity, to make a clean slate of the most authoritative but inconclusive testimonies in contradiction with the nature of facts.

The belief in hell and the devil has been opposed by reasons so peremptory that it is astonishing to see enlightened intelligences still rallying around these concepts today. How can we not understand that by constantly opposing Satan to God, by attributing over the world and the souls a power which grows day by day, we equally diminish the power of God over us, ruining its authority? Can we question the wisdom, the goodness, the foresight of the Creator?

If God is just and good, as Catholic teaching has it, he would not have created a being endowed with all the science of evil, with all the art of seduction, and give him absolute power over a weak and disarmed humankind.

Either Satan is eternal, or it is not. If it is, God is no longer unique; there are two gods, that of good and evil. Should Satan be a creature of God, from that time God became responsible for all the evil caused by Him; because, in creating it, he knew, he saw all the consequences of his work. And hell, inhabited by the vast majority of souls, devoted by their original weakness to sin and damnation, would be the work of God, willed and foreseen by Him!

Such are the consequences of the theory of Satan and Hell. Is it any wonder that it has created so many materialists and atheists? And it is in the

name of Christ, of his teaching of love, charity, and forgiveness, that these doctrines are advocated!

Is this in any way conformable to the true spirit of the Scriptures, that spiritual revelation shows us, after redemption and reparation of our faults, in lives of trials, souls pursuing their ascension to light? As the apostle said, "Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."[359]

What we call demons, as we have seen, are simply lower order spirits, still inclined to evil, but subject, like all souls, to the law of progress. There are not several categories of souls destined, some to happiness, others to eternal misfortune. All are raised through work, study, suffering. Perfect unity and harmony reign in the Universe.

Therefore, let us cease this profaning of the idea of God by conceptions unworthy of infinite greatness and goodness. Let us know how to strip it from all these miserable earthly passions which were attributed to it. Religion will gain in prestige as a result. By bringing it into harmony with the progress of the human mind, it will be made more alive.

To stir the specter of Satan, the whole phantasmagoria of hell, at a time when humanity no longer believes in the myths of yore which lulled its childhood, is to commit an anachronism, is to expose oneself to ridicule. Satan no longer frightens anyone. And those who speak the most are perhaps those who believe it the least.[360] One can deplore the collapse of a productive chimera, which has long been abused, and vent their frustration here and there. However, in face of these recriminations worthy of another age, the disinterested thinker smiles and passes by.

We no longer believe in a God of wrath and vengeance, but in a God of justice and infinite mercy. The bloody and terrible Jehovah is no more. The pitiless hell is closed forever. From heaven comes down to earth, with new revelation, consolation for all sorrows, forgiveness for all weaknesses, redemption for all crimes, expiation and repentance.

XXIV

Mediumship abuse

In the first rank of abuses which must be pointed out, there are frauds and deceptions. Fraud may be either conscious and intentional, or unconscious. In the latter case, they are induced either by the action of evil spirits or by suggestions made on the medium by experimenters and sitters.

Conscious frauds come, sometimes from false mediums, sometimes from genuine but disloyal mediums, that have made their faculty a source of material profit. Unfamiliar with the nobility and importance of their mission, which should be of a precious quality, they make it a means of exploitation and are not afraid, when the phenomenon shies away, to simulate it through artifice and deception.

False mediums are found everywhere. Some are only jokers who amuse themselves at the expense of the populace, and betray themselves sooner or later.

There are others, skillful professionals for whom Spiritism is merely a commodity. They strive to imitate the manifestations in view of the gains to be made. Several were unmasked in full seance; some have been sued in resounding trials.

In this order of facts, the most audacious deceitfulness has been observed. [361] Some individuals, playing with the good faith of those who consult them, have not hesitated to profane the most sacred sentiments, and to cast suspicion upon a science and doctrines which may be a means of regeneration. Most often, their sense of responsibility escapes them, but life beyond the grave has reserved some unpleasant surprises for these types.

The evil that these tricks have done to the truth is incalculable. Their maneuvers have diverted many thinkers from the serious study of Spiritism. It is, therefore, the duty of every honest man to unmask and debunk them. Contempt in this world, remorse and shame in the other, that is what awaits them. For everything shall be paid for, we know; the evil always falls on the one who caused it.

There is nothing more vile and more contemptible than to make money out

of the pain of others, to counterfeit for friends, for loved ones that we mourn, to make death itself a shameless speculation, an object of falsification!

Spiritism cannot be held responsible for such acts. The abuse or imitation of a thing can do nothing to prejudge the thing itself. Do we not see the phenomena of physics frequently imitated by conjurers in walking shows, and does this prove anything against true science? Intelligent seekers must always be on their guard and make constant use of their reason. If there are a few specialized places in which, under the pretense of demonstrations, there is an odious traffic, there are also many circles composed of serious persons whose character, position, and respectability are all guarantees of sincerity, and where no suspicion of charlatanism could penetrate.

It has come to pass, I say, that certain mediums endowed with remarkable faculties have not been afraid to mix, in their sittings, their deceitfulness with real facts, in order to increase their profit or their reputation.

One may wonder how the inhabitants of the Hereafter consent to lend their aid to such unworthy beings. The answer is easy. These spirits, in their ardent desire to manifest themselves to those whom they have loved on Earth, finding in these mediums the elements necessary to materialize and thus to demonstrate their survival, do not hesitate to use these means which are offered to them, in spite of the indignity of the subjects.

This was done in 1906, 1907, 1908, during seances given in Paris by a foreign medium, of which I have already spoken in the preface to this book.

On June 18, 1908, at Mr. David’s house on the Boulevard des Batignolles, the medium being seated outside the cabinet of materializations, in half-light, in the circle of the sitters, an arm seemed to have appeared from a corner of the room. It described a circular movement and touched my head, as well as the Reverend Benezech, a Protestant pastor, seated beside me. A vaporous phantom emerged from the floor, rose under the everybody’s eyes; a voice was sounded, which made a well known name heard. Then it sank and faded and faded gradually into the floor. The medium, very alert and awake, signaled himself these phenomena, at the moment when they occurred at points of the room where he could not have reached.

In a sitting at Mme. Cornély's on July 12, I was placed at the entrance to of cabinet, in front of the opening of the curtains. A childlike spirit, neglecting this opening, crossed the fabric on my left, near Mr. Debrus, seated behind me, and pronounced the words: "Marie, R.o.s.e," then, "Papa, mamma!" It touched Mr. Debrus, and we saw its pretty round arm stretch out over his head and mine. Mr. and Mrs. Debrus are convinced of having seen there, an apparition of their own daughter, who had died in Valence (France) on the November 4, 1902, and of whom I spoken of in my book *Life and Destiny* (New York, G. H. Doran Co., 1918, p. 308). In this case, a simulation seemed impossible, the medium never having known the girl.

The authenticity of these phenomena is indisputable, because they took place in excellent conditions of control. This was not the case afterwards. As soon as the medium retired behind the drapes and darkness was made, significant sounds were heard. During the eleven seances I attended, I became convinced that the medium was undressing, taking off his shoes, and then painting his face to simulate apparitions.

At one of the sittings held at Madame Rufina Noeggerath's, in Milton Street, Paris, two ladies favorably placed to observe, while I was seated further, distinctly saw the medium for the night nude, crouching, then lying on the floor, and gradually rising to raise the floating tulle which served her to imitate the ghosts. These ladies, one of whom was Miss Noeggerath, informed me separately of their impressions, which were concordant, before they spoke of the observed fact.

On September 9, Mr. Drubay, an honest and convinced Spiritist, found on the morrow of a sitting, while unscrewing the cabinet of materializations, a shred of silk tulle of great delicacy, which seemed detached or torn from the ground from a larger piece. A few days afterwards, at the premises of the Societé des Études Psychiques, in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Martin, Paris, under the same conditions, he collected a long black cloth strongly impregnated with a smell of sandalwood and rose combined, that one breathes at certain moments of the seances and that the medium claimed it was supposed to come from the spirits. In summary, more than twenty witnesses found fraud in subsequent sessions.[362] The formal pledge they had made to observe the regulations, alone prevented them from unmasking the guilty party.

The *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* having denounced these acts, I

thought it my duty to raise my voice in order to disclose our responsibilities and that of a cause compromised by such disclosures.[363] In this way the public could see that the Spiritists were not fooled, and that they knew how to discern true from false. Indeed, reporting frauds wherever they occur is the surest way to discourage them.

Working as I did, I have done an unpleasant but necessary work, and honest people have approved my initiative. If, on the one hand, I have been the object of malicious criticism, on the other, I have received high and warm approvals. An eminent psychicist, who occupies a high position in the magistrature, wrote to me on this subject:

“Paris, April 8, 1910. I admired your courage in Mr. —’s affair, because I guessed how much you must have suffered from being obliged to protest. You have done well and you have shown yourself once again the honest and sincere man that you are. I know that certain groups were not exactly happy with what you did, but you have done your duty by chasing the ‘temple merchants.’ What displeases the movement of which you are one of the most respected leaders, is precisely the blindness of certain groups which favor, by their indifference to the sincerity of phenomena, fraudsters and those who rejoice in these frauds.”

“As far as I am concerned, I am with you. The fraud of Mr. — has been proved to me from the very first seances, and I have easily understood its processes, which are fat. I did not say it publicly, out of respect for the people I was hosting. Mr. — had also promised me serious sittings; he did not keep his promises.”

These facts had an epilogue. The Spiritists gathered in Brussels for an international congress in May 1910, expressed the following wish:

“The Spiritist Congress of Brussels, moved by the numerous and repeated frauds which occur in obscure seances given by professional mediums, and moved by the moral prejudice which they cause to our doctrine, invites groups of study and experimenters who seek the physical facts, the contributions and the phenomena of materialization, to use the obscure or half light seances only under conditions of rigorous control.”

They recommended in particular that the hands and feet of the medium be held by two experienced sitters throughout the seance, or that the medium be isolated by means of a stretched net with no gaps; or to place him or her in a cage carefully closed and whose key will remain in the possession of a safe

person.

Half-lit seances are much to be preferred in that they provide means for all sitters to control the phenomena. A highly-gifted medium should be satisfied with it. Medium become suspects when they demands obscurity, even though it increases the psychical force, for it is feared that they will profit from the obscurity to defraud, which has taken place in some cases. We must be content with somewhat less, but safer, results.

The Congress also addresses a pressing appeal to honest and disinterested mediums. It asks them to redouble their zeal for the service of a sacred truth, a truth compromised by shameless simulators. It reminds them that if deceit brings a deserved and severe reprobation, on the other hand devotion and sincerity will receive the esteem and gratitude of all, and the assistance of the high invisible Intelligences, that watch over the progress of our beliefs in the world.

There are unconscious frauds, we have said, which are explained by suggestion. The mediums are very sensitive to the suggestive action of either the living or the dead.[364] The mindset of the people participating in the experiments reacts upon them and exerts an influence of which they are not aware, but which, at times, is considerable.

Perfectly honest and disinterested mediums admit that they are driven to cheat in certain circles by an occult force. Most resist and would prefer to give up exercising their faculty rather than slipping on that slope. Some allow themselves to be affected by these influences. And a single moment of weakness will suffice to cast doubt on all the experiments in which they have participated.

Certain frauds, found in various mediums, can be attributed to external suggestions, whether human or spiritual. Sometimes the two influences combine and add to one another. Malicious skeptics are helped by auxiliaries of the Hereafter. Henceforth, the suggestive power will be all the more irresistible if the medium is the more impressionable, more deeply asleep, and insufficiently protected. We see what dangers this may incur; in some poorly composed, ill-directed seances, the medium may become the victim of combined external forces. This was not the case with the medium Mr. —, of

whom we have just spoken, and who brought with himself the tulle and the other objects necessary for the simulations. In him, premeditation was evident. The tricks were calculated, prepared in advance.

It may happen that the mediums, especially writing mediums, suggest themselves and, with an automatic movement, write communications which they ascribe abusively to discarnate spirits. This autosuggestion is like a normal ego call to the subconscious ego, which is not a distinct being, as we saw earlier, but more like an extended form of personality. In this case, in the best faith of the world, the medium answers its own questions; he or she exteriorizes their hidden thoughts, their own reasonings, the products of a deeper and more intense psychic life. Allan Karade, Davies, Hudson Tuttle, Aksakof, among others, have spoken in their books of this category of mediums which Mr. G. Delanne calls *automatists*:

"The automatism of writing," he says,[365] "the immediate forgetting of the enunciated ideas; which gives the writer the illusion of being under the influence of a foreign will; the personification of ideas, the notions that lie in latent memory, all these facts are understood and explained by reason derived from a more complete study of human intelligence, and do not in any way assume the necessity of the intervention of spirits."

Unlimited credulity, the forgetting of any elementary principle of control which prevail in certain circles, favor and maintain these abuses. There are, in different countries, groups of voluntary Spiritists, in which pseudo-medium automatons write vast lucubrations under the supposed inspiration of St. Anthony of Padua, St. Joseph, and the Virgin Mary. Or then, they incarnate Socrates and Muhammad, and these, in a vulgar language, will come to tell a thousand absurdities to amazed audiences, forbidding them to read and to learn, in order to save them from any enlightened influence, any serious control.

In these environments mystifications are no longer counted. I knew a brave gardener who, on the advice of a spirit, was going to dig a huge hole at midnight in a deserted place in search of an imaginary treasure. A 55-year-old, very devout lady wife of a retired officer, pushed her naivety to the point of preparing the layette of a child she was to bring into the world and which would be the reincarnation of Christ, said her invisible teachers. Some see the intervention of the spirits everywhere, even in the most material facts. Others consult with the invisibles on the smallest details of their existence, on their

commercial enterprises and on their stock exchange operations.

These aberrations are generally attributed to deceptive spirits. Of course, mystifications from beyond the grave are frequent. They are easily explained by the fact that spirits are often asked for things that they cannot or do not want to say. Spiritism is made a means of divination, and irresponsible and frivolous spirits are attracted to it. But, often, mental suggestion play a large part in these errors.

This is why, in this difficult and sometimes obscure field of experimentation, it is important to examine, to analyze things with a cold judgment and great circumspection, and to admit only what presents itself with a well defined character of authenticity. Our knowledge of the conditions of the future life and the whole of Spiritualism rests on mediumistic phenomena. These should be studied seriously, and all that does not bear the mark of an extra-human origin should be rigorously removed. Replacing systematic incredulity with blind confidence, with ridiculous credulity, must not substitute the factitious and the real. The future of Spiritism depends on it.

Let us now turn to an extremely delicate question; that involving professional mediumship. Can mediumship be rewarded? Or must it be exercised with the requirement of absolute disinterestedness?

Let us first note that the mediumistic faculty is, in its nature, a variable, mobile and intermittent thing. Since spirits are not at the command or caprice of anyone, the result of the meetings is never assured. The medium may be indisposed, badly trained; the assistance, badly composed from the psychical point of view. On the other hand, the protection of high spirits is hardly allied with a price tag on Spiritualism. Thus the professional medium, the one who has grown accustomed to living on the commercial product of his or her faculty, is exposed to many mistakes. How will a medium make money of a thing whose production is never certain? How will they satisfy the curious, when the spirits will not answer their call? Will the medium not be tempted some day, when the attendants will be numerous and great the prospect of

enticing gain, to provoke phenomena fraudulently? As soon as you have slipped on this slope, it is difficult to raise from it. One usually manages to deceive and one gradually falls into the most shameless charlatanism.

The American delegates to the Paris Spiritualist and Spiritist Congress of 1900, Mrs. Addie Ballou, among others, declared that professional mediumship and the frauds it entails have been a cause of retreat and discredit for Spiritism in recent years in the United States.

The best guarantee of sincerity that a medium can offer is disinterest. It is also the surest way to get assistance from above.

In order to preserve its moral prestige, in order to bring about the fruits of truth, mediumship must be practiced with elevation and detachment. Without them, it becomes a source of abuse, the instrument of contradiction and disorder used by malicious entities. The venal medium is like the bad priest who introduces into the sanctuary his selfish passions and his material interests. The comparison is not inappropriate, for mediumship, too, is a kind of priesthood. Every human being marked by this sign must prepare himself or herself for the sacrifice of their repose, their interests, and even their earthly happiness. Yet, in doing so, the medium will obtain the satisfaction of his or her conscience, and draw near to their spirit guides.

To trade in mediumship is to dispose of resources of which one is not the master; it is the abuse of the goodwill of the dead, enslaving them to a work unworthy of them. Is to divert Spiritism from its providential purpose. It is preferable for the medium to look elsewhere for means of existence, and to devote to the seances only the time which he or she may dispose of. Thus the medium will gain in esteem and consideration.

However, it must be recognized that public and remunerated mediums have rendered some real services. Poor people cannot always respond to scientists' calls, move about, undertake trips, as required by the interest of the cause they serve.

The following is what Stainton Moses, who was a conscientious experimenter and a good judge in the matter, had to say about the subject:[366]

"Most of the facilities for investigation which an ordinary investigator finds at his disposal are such as seem to be constructed for the very purpose of bewildering one who possesses this mysterious psychic power; and some, I fear, who only pretend to its possession, advertise that, for a small remuneration, they will place the public in relation with the world of spirit.

This of itself is, I should hope, a transitory state of affairs. Far be it from me to utter a word that could even seem to disparage the work done by public mediums. I am conscious that it is not held in the estimation that it should be; and that perhaps as much from the obloquy brought upon it by some whose frauds have discredited it, as from any other cause. When it is discharged, as I have seen it, with a sense of responsibility and an honest desire to bring to the investigator such evidence as is possible, much good is effected.

"But too often what happens is this: A number of persons assemble, most of them densely ignorant of any conditions to be observed; some animated by mere curiosity, a few by a dumb desire to see what can be had through the only source open to them as evidence of a future life: all, in nine cases out of ten, unfit, for one or more of many causes, for the solemn work they have undertaken."

What to infer from all this? It is a just measure that the medium, endowed with conscience, enlightened on the value of his or her mission, can easily observe. If in certain cases he or she is obliged to accept compensation for the time lost and the displacements made, so as to not compromise their dignity in this world and their situation in the other. The use of mediumship must remain a grave and religious act, freed from all mercantile character, from all that may diminish or reduce its role.

XXV
Mediumship as martyrdom

Sometimes, as I have said, the medium is a victim, and almost always this victim is a woman. The middle ages had made her a witch and burned her. Current science, less barbarous, is satisfied with the name of hysterical or charlatan.

At the dawn of Modern Spiritualism, two American girls, Catherine and Margaret Fox, were the first to perceive the manifestations, to collect the message of immortality. Their testimony signaled a violent persecution. Wild scenes occurred, storms of threats and insults broke out around the Fox family, which did not prevent them from pursuing their mission and confronting the most hostile environments.

When it takes great dedication and commitment to bring humanity back to its ways, it is often in women that they are met with. What we say of the Fox sisters, might be said the greatest mediums. Joan of Arc was burned alive for not wanting to deny her apparitions and her voices. With her, the martyrology of woman mediums did not end. For some who have allowed themselves to be seduced by material advantages and have used deceit, others have sacrificed their health and compromised their existence for the cause of truth!

If psychical mediumship is harmless when it is used for advanced spirits, , as we shall see later, it is not the same with physical manifestations, and especially with materializations, which in the long run may bring to the senses , a great loss of strength and life. The Fox sisters were exhausted by the experiments and extinguished in misery. The *Revue Spirite*, of April 1902, announced that the last members of the Fox family died in January, of cold and privations. Elsewhere, Madame Hauffe, the celebrated clairvoyant of Prevorst, was treated with the utmost severity by her own relatives, and died at the age of twenty-eight, as a result of innumerable tribulations. Madame d’Espérance lost her health. After D. D. Home, Slade, Eglinton, La Paladino were all accused of voluntary fraud.

Some mediums have been subjected to all imaginable moral tortures, without any prior examination, without serious investigation. For example, D.

D. Home was the object of the most perfidious accusations. But William Crookes did him justice by saying:[367]

“I think it is a cruel thing that a man like D. D. Home, gifted with such extraordinary powers, and always willing, nay, anxious, to place himself at the disposal of men of science for investigation, should have lived so many years in London, and with one or two exceptions no one of weight in the scientific world should have thought it worth while to look into the truth or falsity of things which were being talked about in society on all sides. To those who knew him, Home was one of the most lovable of men, and his perfect genuineness and uprightness were beyond suspicion, but by those who did not know him he was called a charlatan, and those who believed in him were considered little better than lunatics.”

More recently, I have seen a German medium eagerly persecuted with brutal eagerness and, despite powerful testimonies, sacrificed to the requirements of the narrowest caste of spirit. They wanted, it was said, “to put an end to all manifestations of a Spiritualism freed from official dogmas.”

Anna Rothe was arrested and put in prison. The detention lasted eight months. Meanwhile her husband and daughter died, without her being able to attend their last moments. It was only allowed for her to kneel on her pit between two gendarmes. Finally, when the investigation was over, the trial reopened.[368] Favorable testimonies flock; Professor Koersinger, the philologist Herman Eischacker and Dr. Langsdorff saw the facts and could not detect any deception. Mr George Sulzer, President of the Court of Cassation of Zurich, attested to his faith in Mrs Rothe’s innocence. The first magistrate of the Canton of Zurich, in the judicial system, is not afraid to give publicity to his intimate beliefs in order to benefit the accused. Other magistrates affirm the authenticity of the flowering of flowers that it obtained in full light. These witnesses saw flowers or dematerialized fruits being reconstituted in their presence, condensed into palpable matter, like a cloud of steam which gradually transforms and solidifies, in the state of ice. These objects moved horizontally or descended slowly from the ceiling.

The director of the prison where she spent her time in preventive detention, declares that the moral instruction given to her inmates never approached, as an effect, the impression produced by her moving discourses, of the most edifying order, given by the medium in trance to her lost sisters. But otherwise she is just Anna Rothe, a simple woman of the people without

education, without culture of mind.

After passionate debates lasting six days, the “medium of the flowers” was sentenced to 18 months in prison. One is mistaken in believing that Spiritualism is destroyed by such methods. On the contrary, to the attraction which it inspires, one adds the prestige of the unjust persecution.

On October 9, 1861, the bishop of Barcelona burned three hundred Spiritist volumes and pamphlets on the public esplanade, at the place where the criminals were executed, believing that thus they stigmatized and annihilated the new doctrine. This auto-da-fé[369] provoked a mighty upheaval of opinion. Today, there are thousands of Spiritists in the capital of Catalonia. They have magazines, libraries, and study and experimental groups. The Spiritist movement is becoming ever more important and extensive in Spain.

Most scientists and scholars, doctors and psychologists, regard mediums as hysterical, deranged, and sick people, and do not fail to proclaim it. They are used to experimenting with subjects drawn from hospitals or lunatic asylums, at least with the help of neurasthenics, and, from observations made under these defective conditions, they are wrong to draw general conclusions.

Some men of letters are not more tender. Mr. Jules Bois unhesitatingly decorates all mediums of epithets such as “charlatans, conjurors, dupers, psychopaths, hysterics, etc”[370] Can we be surprised then that, after all, mediums hold their reserve or only lend themselves with ill grace to experiments directed by critics full of prejudice, and such fierce and unfriendly judges? The presence of these skeptics with their icy emanations is a cause of discomfort and suffering for the medium. Scholars, in general, lack goodness; Spiritists, most often mediums, lack science. Where can a bridge be found, a point of reconciliation? In sincere, impartial, and disinterested study!

Medical science is far from being infallible in its judgments. Diagnoses as famous as they are erroneous have proved it at all times. Formal testimony shows that it was once again mistaken in regard to mediumship as a type of a defect.

F. W. H. Myers declares with regard to Mrs. Thompson:[371] “The impression made on the observer is that the trance is as natural as ordinary

sleep. Mrs. Thompson believes that her health has derive marked benefit from these trances."

Mr. Flournoy, who cannot be suspected of partiality towards mediums, has observed the same fact in regard to Hélène Smith. Her health is by no means altered by the use of psychical faculties; she finds, on the contrary, a powerful appanage for the accomplishment of her daily tasks.[372] The same remarks were made elsewhere about Mrs. Piper.[373]

Mr. J. W. Colville, a well-known British medium, attests in turn:[374]

"But now that I have just rounded out a full twenty-five years of public service, I feel it a solemn duty as well as a high privilege to bear unequivocal testimony to the always beneficial effect which mediumship such as I have developed has had on me from all standpoints. Mentally and physically I owe immensely much to those very endowments and experiences which mistaken people imagine are weakening to mind and body. That there are dangers and drawbacks I do not deny, but through all my varied and protracted experiences on and off the platform, for more than a quarter of a century, I have invariably found that the directions given me from unseen helpers have been sound, elevating, and truthful to the letter in all particulars."

I myself have known a great number of mediums from all parts of France, Belgium and Switzerland, and have seen that they generally enjoyed good health. The mediumship of physical effects, that which lends itself to the materialization of spirits and to apportation,[375]can alone entail a great loss of force. These losses can be offset with the help of Protective Spirits. Yet sometimes, as we have seen, the sisters Fox, Slade, Eglinton, etc., the demands posed by the public and the scholars are such that the medium is exhausted quickly. The abuse of experience alters the mediums' health and compromises their lives.

The medium is a sensitive and delicate instrument, which is believed to be able to be used as a mechanism. Some would willingly use the medium as children would their toys, which they break to see what is hidden inside. The development work required by nascent faculties is not sufficiently taken into account. Conclusive facts and proofs of identity are required right away. The medium, impressed by the ambient thoughts, suffers; after having been morally tortured during a certain number of seances, the medium becomes disgusted with a faculty that exposes him or her to so many disappointments, and ends it by escaping.

Mediums will have long to suffer for the truth. The adversaries of Spiritism will continue to denigrate and accuse them; they will try to make them pass for unbalanced, sick individuals, while using all means to divert them from their mission. Knowing that the medium is the *sine qua non* (the indispensable and essential element) of the phenomenon, they hope to ruin Spiritism in its foundations. If necessary for their goal, they bring forth fictional and exploitative mediums. It is important to avoid these tactics, counteracting them by encouraging and supporting the good mediums, while providing the necessary control for the exercise of their faculties. Their task is beautiful, though sometimes painful. How many efforts, how many years of waiting, of trials, of prayer, in order to get, receive and transmit the ray from the higher above! They are often rewarded only with injustice. But, servers of the divine plan, they will have dug the furrow and deposited the seed from which will emerge the harvest of the future.

Dear mediums, banish all discouragement, avoid any failure. Raise your eyes above this passing world. Call for God's help. Suppress the *self*; free yourself from that excessively strong affection we have for ourselves. Living for others, everything lies in it! Have a spirit of sacrifice. Stay poor, rather than enrich yourself by fraud and betrayal. Stay obscure, rather than have people tampering with your powers. Know how to suffer, for the good of all and your own progress. Poverty, obscurity, and suffering have their beauty, charm, and grandeur; it is through them that slowly, through silent generations, treasures of patience, strength, and virtue are formed. It is through them that the soul detaches itself from material vanities, purifying and sanctifying itself, until it becomes valiant enough to climb to the harsh tops.

In the realm of the spirit, as in the physical world, nothing is lost, everything is transformed. Every pain, every sacrifice is a birth. Suffering is the mysterious operator who works in the depths of our soul, and it works for our elevation. By listening, you would almost hear the sound of its work. Remember one thing: it is on the field of pain that the edifice of our powers, our virtues, and our joys to come, is built!

XXVI
Mediumship in its glory

Mediums of our time are often misunderstood, disdained, persecuted. But if in one glance you can embrace the vast perspective of history, mediumship, under its various names, will appear to you as what there is of greatest value in this world. Almost all the privileged ones: prophets; seers; missionaries; messengers of love, of truth, of justice; practically all of them have been mediums, in the sense that they have communicated with the unseen, with the infinite.

One might say that, in many respects, genius is a form of mediumship. Persons of genius are inspired in the most transcendental and crucial sense of this word. They are the intermediaries and messengers of higher thought. Their mission is intended. It is through them that God converses with the world; it is through them that he calls and attracts humankind to him. Their works are like lanterns which he lights on the long road of the centuries.

Should we, for that reason, regard them as mere instruments; and have they no right to our admiration? That is not how we think. Genius is, above all, an achievement of the past, the result of patient, centuries-old studies, of a slow and painful initiation. The latter have developed in the being these immense aptitudes and a deep sensitivity, which open it to high influences. God reserves the light alone for that one, who long sought it, desired it, and asked for it.

Friedrich von Schlegel, speaking of geniuses, arrives at this conclusion: “What men are among the other formations of the earth, artists are among men.”[376]

Are they still human when being geniuses? Indeed, they are still human beings, by all that they have of earthly, by their passions, their weaknesses. They suffer all the miseries of the flesh, the diseases, the wants, the material desires. But by which they are more than men, what makes them genius is the accumulation of the riches of thought, the slow elaboration of intelligence

and feeling through countless lives, all this fertilized by the inflow, by the inspiration from above, by a constant communion with higher order worlds. Genius, in its thousand forms, is a collaboration with the invisible, an assumption of the human soul towards God.

Humans of genius, saints, prophets, great poets, scholars, artists, inventors, all those who have enlarged the domain of the soul, have been sent from heaven. They are the executors of God's designs in the world. The whole philosophy of history is there! Is it a more beautiful spectacle than this uninterrupted mediumistic chain, which connects the centuries together, like the pages of a great book of life, and brings back all the events, even the most contradictory in appearance, to the harmonious plan of a majestic and solemn unity? The existence of every human of genius is like a living chapter of this grandiose Bible.

First, there appear the great initiates of the ancient world, the fathers of thought, those who have seen the Spirit shine on the summits or reveal itself in the sanctuaries of sacred initiation: Orpheus, Hermes, Krishna, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Plato, Moses. The great Hebrew prophets: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel. Later, there will come John the Baptist, Christ and all the apostolic pleiad; the seer of Patmos, and the mediumistic explosion of Pentecost that would light the world, according to the word of Joel; and again Hypatia of Alexandria and Velleda the female druid. It is in the august silence of forests and mountains, by their detachment of sensual things, in meditation and prayer, that the prophet, the seer, the inspired all prepared for their task. The invisible is revealed only to lonely humans in retreat. Plato receives his inspirations on the summit of Mount Hymettus; Muhammad, on Mount Hira; Moses on the Sinai; Jesus communicated with his Father, in tears and prayer, on the Mount of Olives.

Prophetism in Israel for twenty consecutive centuries is one of the most prominent transcendental phenomena in history. Contemporary criticism has understood nothing of it, or pretended not to understand it; it thought it could simplify everything by denying it. Catholic exegesis has distorted it, thinking to explain everything in one word: the miracle. Yet it had another more just

word by calling the prophets “the living harps of the Holy Spirit.” Thus, on this point, as on so many others, science and religion, when isolated, can give only incomplete notions. Alone, Spiritism, serving as a link to one and the other, can reconcile them. Spiritism has penetrated the apparent mystery of things; it projects the light of the Hereafter on theology, which it completes, and on experimentalism, which it illuminates. The truth is that the Israelite prophets were inspired mediums; this denomination alone suits them. We will see this later by examples from the Bible. They will show us that the history of Israel is the most beautiful mediumistic poem, the spiritual epic par excellence. This is certainly what scientific exegesis will one day say. And through it, the obscurities of the sacred books will disappear. Everything will be explained; everything will become both simple and great.

The origin of prophecy in Israel is marked by an imposing manifestation. One day, Moses chooses 70 elders and places them around the tabernacle, Jehovah reveals his presence in a cloud; the powerful faculties of Moses communicated themselves to the elders, and “they prophesied.”[377] The tabernacle here plays the role of accumulator or fluidic condenser; it is a means of exteriorization, such as glossy metal mirrors. In contemplating it, one induced trance. The manifestation of Jehovah in the cloud is a mode of materialization. The latter, as we have seen, always begins with a nebulous cluster, vague at first, in which the apparition takes shape and becomes more and more precise. Jehovah is one of the Elohim, protective spirits of the Jewish people and of Moses in particular. Under his influence, Moses’ spiritual powers are transmitted to the 70 elders, as the powers of Christ will later be partially transmitted to the apostles in the Upper Room, as we see today, in some cases, from one person to another through passes and touching.

Thus begins prophetism or sacred mediumship in Israel. Moses, initiated into the mysteries of Isis by his long stay in Egypt, and especially by his family relations with his father-in-law, Jethro, high priest of Heliopolis, was in his turn the psychical initiator of his people, before becoming the immortal legislator.

From then on, prophetic mediumship became permanent among the Jews, albeit intermittent in its manifestations. It is visibly subordinated to certain psychological states, which are not always constant, either in individuals or in peoples. In the time of the Judges, prophecy was “a rare thing.” With Samuel

it reappears, it shines with a new splendor. At that time, the state of mind of the Hebrew people was better suited to this phenomenon. In the life of nations there are periods of intellectual disturbance and moral depression which oblige the Spirit to move away momentarily. France, too, experienced its hours of darkness and uncertainty.

Samuel, having understood that transcendental mediumship is subordinated to the moral dispositions of individuals and societies, instituted schools of prophets, that is to say, groups in which the mysteries of fluidic communication were initiated.

These schools were established in a few towns, but rather in solitary valleys or declines of mountains. Study, the contemplation of the infinite, in the silence and beauty of the nights, under the glitter of the stars; or in the light of day, under the clear sky of the East, prepared the apprentice-prophet to receive the inflow from above. Solitude attracts him; as he moves away from humans and isolates himself, a more intimate communion is established between him and the world of divine forces. In the deep gorges of the Judean mountains, in the wild caverns of the Moab, he dreams and lends his ear to a thousand voices of that austere and grave nature which surrounds him.

It is because the whole nature, penetrated by divine substance, is a medium, so to speak, an intermediary between humans and higher beings. Everything is connected in this immense universe; a magnetic chain connects all beings, all the worlds. It took our fragmentary science and the dissolving excess of the so-called critical spirit to destroy this magnificent synthesis and isolate modern humans from the rest of the universe and its harmonious planes.

Music played a great part in prophetic initiation.[378] This art, as we know, puts rhythm into fluidic emission and facilitates the action of invisible powers. The preparation was laborious, the novitiate difficult. During the first two years, the aspiring prophet was simply a passive medium; then he learned to become active and, by exteriorization, to read in the invisible clichés, the norm of the events to come. This exercise was long and often misleading.[379]

Sometimes successive contrary influences agitated the prophets. Such was the case of Balaam, who went to curse the tribes and was forced to prophesy their glory. Never was the duality of the inspiring spirits more evident than in this biblical episode.

It will sometimes be difficult to determine in mediumship, of any nature

whatsoever, the part of the medium and that of the Spirit. Hence there are apparent contradictions, a sort of intimate psychological struggle between the medium and the person who inspires it. It is the symbolic struggle of Jacob and the angel, but always it is the Spirit that finally defeats, and its light victoriously permeates the mentality and the will of anything sensuous.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the spirit, when it is of an elevated nature, never violates the subject of which he takes possession; it respects his or her personality and freedom, and proceeds only with delicacy and persuasion. That is why every prophet, whether as great as Isaiah or humble as Pastor Amos,[380] keeps his usual language and the stamp of his personality in the accomplishment of his mission. Thus, in our day, two mediums, to interpret the same revelation, will not express themselves in the same terms and will not see in the same light.

On each page of the Bible, we find texts affirming mediumship in all its forms and degrees. Under the names of gods, angels, etc., the protective spirits of individuals or nations take part in every fact, intervene in every event.[381]

Moses is seeing and hearing medium. He sees Jehovah, the protective Spirit of Israel, in the bush of Horeb and on Mount Sinai. When he leans over the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant, he hears voices (Nm 7:89). He is also a writing medium, when he draws, under the dictation of Elohim, the Tables of the Law; an active medium; a powerful magnetizer, when he struck a flaming discharge on rebelled Hebrews in the desert; an inspired medium, when he sings his wonderful song after the defeat of Pharaoh. Moses also presents us with a special kind of mediumship, the luminous transformation, observed in certain contemporary phenomena. When he descends from Sinai, he carries a halo of light on his forehead.

Samuel, whose birth, like that of a predestinate, was preceded by oracles and signs, became a prophet from childhood. Sleeping in the temple, he is often awakened by voices calling him and talking to him in the night, announcing future things to him (Kings).

In 4 Ezra 14, the scribe Ezra (same as Esdras) reconstructs the whole Bible which had been lost, and this in conditions where different kinds of

mediumship are still affirmed. The voice said to him:[382]

"'Prepare a great many tablets, and bring five quick and clever scribes. And I will light in your heart the lamp of understanding, which shall not be quenched until you have finished writing what you have begun.' My mouth opened and did not close. I dictated incessantly, night and day. And the Most High gave intelligence to the five men who were with me, and they wrote the revelations of the night, things which they did not understand. And thus, for forty days, were written 204 books."[383]

Job had a vision, which is the perfect type of spiritualist materialization. The whole book of Job is filled with illuminations and mediumistic inspirations. His very life, tormented by evil spirits, is the subject for very suggestive studies.

The Bible mentions frequent cases of obsession, among others that of Saul, who is often possessed by a spirit of anger: "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit ... tormented him."[384] This is nothing other than a well-characterized phenomenon of incorporation.

Saul was at first a medium of "the LORD," but in consequence of grave faults and a disorderly life, he lost his faculty, or rather became the instrument of inferior spirits. This loss or weakening of his mediumistic powers is frequent among those who let themselves be invaded by passions. Then mediumship will diminish and disappear without apparent cause; but, ordinarily, because the intimate dispositions of the medium have been modified.

The prophet's mission, like that of contemporary mediums, was strewn with pitfalls. In chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Hebrews we must read the trials, the humiliations, the sufferings which these inspired mediums underwent. One of the most painful tasks of a prophet's life was to fight impostors. There have always been, and will always be, false prophets, that is, mediums driven by evil spirits. Their aim seems to be to thwart the action of the true prophets, to sow discord in their customary circles. Many Spiritist groups have disintegrated under the influence of lower order spirits. That is why the great art of the Spiritualist consists in guarding the circles against these nefarious influences which eagerly follow the footsteps of the missionaries of peace and truth.

Summing up, the work of the Hebrew prophets was considerable. Their monotheistic and moralizing preaching prepared the advent of Christianity

and the religious evolution of mankind. Individuals of meditation, of retreat, of prayer, the great Jewish mediums knew and taught that trade with the invisible was a regenerating principle. Their mission was to spiritualize the religion of Moses, which tended to materialize, just as contemporary Spiritism, too, has the mission of spiritualizing today's society, which is increasingly decomposing, and of bringing the churches back to the pure traditions of primitive Christianity.

The Hebrew prophets were the advisers of the kings of Israel, the rectifiers of abuses of power, the consolers of the oppressed and afflicted people. Like all men of genius, they had traveled many lives, which were lives of work, of painful research, which had developed in them a profound intuition. Their penetration of things, their marvelous perspicacity, were but the fruits of earlier incarnations. Having lived in the past of Israel, they had a perfect understanding of the soul of the nation. Likewise, John the Baptist, who was the reincarnation of Elijah, powerfully prepared his brethren for the revelation of Jesus.

The usual theme of prophetic teaching was worship "in Spirit and in Truth." The prophets energetically fought the Pharisaic formalism of the law and said loudly that the circumcision of the heart is better than that of the flesh. Thus, in our day, the spirits condemn the material practices and the narrow Pharisaism of the false devotees, that is, of all those who, under the pretext of religion, replace the precepts of the Gospel by superstitious practices.

The virtue most recommended by the seers of Israel was justice. The righteous word then signified the whole of the virtues: "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Mt 22:21) The advocates of the poor were everywhere, the socially disinherited who then called themselves the *Ebionim* (the poor, the paupers). After the sin of idolatry, there were the contempt for the poor and the oppression of the weak as the most resolutely condemned.

Isaiah, above all, was an eloquent advocate of the poor. The Messiah, whom he proclaims, is the one who will judge the poor with righteousness (Is 11:4). It is precisely for this great love of the humble that some modern rationalists have called the prophets demagogues, fiery enemies of every dynasty.

In reality, three major mediumistic revelations dominate history. To the

prophets of Israel succeeded the divine medium, Jesus. Spiritism is the last revelation, the spiritual diffusion announced by Joel (Jl, 2:28), “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; that sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Even the Protestant theologian Eduard Wilhelm Eugen Reuss agrees that according to this oracle “the outpouring of the spirit will be so ample that the whole nation will become a people of prophets.” Thus, the psychical action of the Hereafter will transform the future world into a humanity of seeing and hearing mediums. Mediumship will be the ultimate state of the human race marching towards the end of its destiny.

Let us descend the course of the ages and see mediumship flourish in the most diverse circles, uniform in its principle, varied to infinity in its manifestations. The story of the prophets of Israel was closed by the appearance of the son of Mary. As we have seen elsewhere,[385] the life of Christ is filled with manifestations which make him the mediator by excellence. Jesus was a seer and an inspired man, the greatest of all those whom the divine breath has made alive during their passage on Earth. The mystery of the invisible envelops his whole person, his entire existence. He converses with Moses and Elijah on Tabor, and legions of souls attend him. His thought embraces two universes. His word has the sweetness of the angelic worlds; his eyes read in the secret of hearts and, with a simple touch, he drives out the suffering.

These marvelous faculties were partially communicated to his apostles, to whom he said:

“Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” (Mt 10:19–20)

Centuries pass; the scene changes. There, in the East, another imposing figure rises.

In the silence of the desert, the great silence of spaces which imparts to the soul a serenity and a balance which is little known by the inhabitants of the cities, Muhammad,[386] the founder of Islam, writes the Koran under the

dictation of a Spirit, which takes, to be listened to, the name and appearance of the angel Gabriel.[387]

It himself affirms it in the sacred book of the Muslins:

"Your compatriot, O Koreishites, is not misguided; he was not deceived." – The Koran is a revelation made to him. "It was the Fearsome who instructed him." And he revealed to the servant of God what he had to reveal to him. – Muhammad's heart does not lie; he saw it."[388]

Strange similarity: his mission begins like that of Joan of Arc; it reveals itself to him by voices and visions.[389] Like Jeanne, for a long time he will resist it; but the mysterious power prevails over his will, and the humble cameleer becomes the founder of a religion which extends over a vast part of the world; he creates a great people and a great empire from scratch.

On the subject of his mediumistic faculties, the French historian E. Bonnemère says:[390]

"Mohammed fell from time to time into a state which terrified those who surrounded him. In those moments when his personality escaped him, and when he felt invaded by a will more powerful than his own, they avoided his gaze. His eyes, which were immeasurably open, were fixed and blindly staring; motionless, he seemed faded into a blackout which nothing could dispel. Then, little by little, the inspiration emerged, and he wrote what mysterious voices dictated to him with a vertiginous rapidity."

In the Middle Ages we can mention two great historical figures: Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of a new world, driven by a divine obsession; and Joan of Arc who obeyed her voices.

In his hazardous mission, Columbus was guided by an invisible genius. He was called a visionary. At times of greatest difficulty, he heard an unknown voice whisper in his ear: "God wants your name to gloriously resonate throughout the world; you will be given the keys of all those unknown ports of the ocean which are now closed by powerful chains."[391]

The life of Joan of Arc is in all memories. We know that everywhere invisible beings inspired and directed the heroic virgin of Domremy.[392] All the events of her glorious epic are announced in advance. Apparitions arise before her; celestial voices rustled in her ears. Inspiration flows in her like the current of a rapid wave. In the midst of fighting, in councils, in front of her judges, everywhere, this child of eighteen years of age commands or answers with assurance, conscious of the sublime part she plays; never wavering,

either in her faith or her words; unshaken, even before tortures, even before death; illuminated and transfigured by the light of another world. Let us listen to her!

“I love the Church and am a good Christian. But as to the works I have made and my coming, I must wait the king of Heaven who has sent me.”

“I have come from God and the Holy of Holies of Paradise, and the victorious Church from above, and from their commandment; to this Church I submit all my actions and all that I did or have done.”[393]

The life of Joan of Arc, as a medium and as a missionary, would be unparalleled in history, had it not been for the torturer of Calvary. We can at least say that nothing more august has been seen since the early days of Christianity.

To these glorious names we are entitled to add those of the great poets. After music, poetry is one of the purest centers of inspiration; it provokes the intellectual ecstasy, which makes it possible to communicate with the superior worlds. More than other fellow human beings, the poet feels, loves and suffers. All the voices of nature sing in him. The rhythm of invisible life regulates the rhythm of its verses.

All the great epic poets begin their songs with an invocation to the gods or the muse; and the gods invoked, that is to say, or better saying the inspiring spirits, answer the call. They whisper in the ear of the poet a thousand sublime things, a thousand things that the poet alone hears among humans.

Homer has songs that have come from higher than this Earth.

Plato said (in *Dialogues*: *Ion*, *Meno*): “The poet and the prophet, to receive inspiration, must enter a higher state, where their intellectual horizon is enlarged and illuminated by a higher light.” – “It is not the seers, the prophets, nor the poets who speak; but God that speaks through them.”

According to Pythagoras (Diogenes Laertius, VIII, 32), “Inspiration is a suggestion of the spirits which reveal the future and the hidden things.”

Virgil was long regarded as a prophet because of his Messianic Eclogue.

Dante Alighieri was an incomparable medium. His *Divine Comedy* is a pilgrimage through invisible worlds. Frédéric Ozanam, the main Catholic author who has analyzed this genial work, recognizes that the plan is modeled on the great leagues of initiation into the ancient mysteries, the principle of which is known as communion with the occult.

It is through the eyes of his dead Beatrice that Dante sees “the splendor of

living eternal light," and his whole life is enlightened. In the midst of this gloomy Middle Ages, his life and work shone like the Alpine peaks when they were colored by the last rays of the day, and the rest of the Earth was already plunged into the night.

At the age of eighteen, Torquato Tasso composed his chivalrous poem *Renaud*, inspired by Ariosto; and later, in 1575, his capital work, *Gerusalemme liberata* [*Jerusalem Delivered*], a vast epic which he claims to have been equally inspired to him.

Shakespeare, Milton and Shelley were also inspired.

Speaking of the great dramatist, Victor Hugo said: "Forbes, in the curious little work perused by Warburton and lost by Garrick, affirms that Shakespeare devoted himself to the practice of magic, that magic was in his family, and that what little good there was in his pieces was dictated to him by one 'Alleur,' a spirit"[394]

All sorts of brilliant works are peopled with phantoms and apparitions: "There, there," says Aeschylus[395] speaking of the dead, "you do not see them; but I can see them."

The same occurs in Shakespeare himself. His masterpieces,[396] such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, etc., contain famous scenes involving spirit apparitions.

The specters of Hamlet's and Banquo, bound to the material world by the weight of their past, make themselves visible and push the living to crime.

Milton had by his daughters play the harp before composing his songs of *Paradise Lost*, because, as he said, harmony attracted inspiring geniuses.

This is what was said of Shelley by his biographer, Thomas Medwin:

"He was subject," says Medwin, "to strange and sometimes frightful dreams, and was haunted by apparitions that bore all the semblance of reality ... He was given to waking dreams, a sort of lethargy and abstraction that became habitual to him, and after the fit was over, his eyes flashed, his lips quivered, his voice was tremulous with emotion, a sort of ecstasy came over him, and he talked more like a spirit or an angel than a human being."[397]

Goethe drew to a large extent from the sources of the invisible. His relations with Lavater and Madame de Klettenborg had initiated him into the deep sciences, and each of his works bears their seal. The *Faust* is a mediumistic, symbolic work that reached the level of a masterpiece. The same could be said of German poet Klopstock and his work *Der Messias*, a poem in which one can feel the breath of the Hereafter.

“I sometimes ran to my desk,” said Goethe, “without taking the trouble to straighten out a piece of paper that was wrong, and I wrote my piece of verse from the beginning to the end, at an angle, without moving. To this end I preferred to take a pencil, which lends itself better to drawing characters, for it sometimes happened to me to be awakened from my somnambulist poetry by the noise or by the spitting of my pen, to become distracted and to stifle a small production at its birth.”[398]

William Blake affirms that he wrote his poems under the direction of Milton’s spirit and acknowledges that all his works have been inspired.

Closer to us, French dramatist and poet Alfred de Musset had visions, apparitions and voices. One evening, under the wickets of the Louvre, he perceived these words: “I was murdered at the Rue de Chabanais.” He ran and crossed his path with a corpse.[399] “Where does this invisible hand led me that let me not be detained?” he said.[400]

By turns sublime and pure as the angels, or depraved like a demon, he was subject to the most diverse influences, and he himself remarked this fact. Two witnesses to his intimate life, George Sand and Louise Colet, have faithfully portrayed this mysterious aspect of the existence of “l’enfant du siècle” [“a child of the century”], as he was known:

“‘Yes,’ said he to Theresa, ‘I suffer the phenomenon which Thaumaturgists call *possession*. Two spirits have seized me.”[401]

“I have had visions for many years and I hear voices. How can I doubt it when all my senses affirm it? How many times, when night falls, I have seen and heard the young prince who was dear to me, and another of my friends fought a duel before me! ... It seems to me that at the time when this communion takes place, that my spirit detaches itself from my body to respond to the voices of the spirits who speak to me.”[402]

Louise Colet kept from the poet an account of three apparitions of beloved dead women which she describes in a moving manner.[403] She adds several cases of exteriorization similar to those of our contemporary mediums. G. Sand and L. Colet assert that the poet showed great facility to enter into trance.[404] He himself speaks of cold breaths he felt, and of sudden out-of-the-body experiences, which would have been difficult for him to imagine.

It appears from these facts that A. de Musset owed to occult influences at least a part of the ascendancy he exercised over his contemporaries. He was at once a poet of high inspiration and, properly speaking, a seeing and a

hearing medium.

In all times, these subtle communications from spirits to mortals have come to fecundate art and literature. Of course, we do not call literature these line-ups of phrases that have never felt the breath of the Hereafter. Of course, the writers in whom the superior emanations descended do exist in numbers. It takes preexisting dispositions, a slow labor of assimilation, so that the unknown force can act upon the soul of the thinker. But in those who realize these conditions, inspiration rushes like a flood. The thought arises, whether original or powerful, and the influence it exercises is sovereign.

The form of inspiration varies according to individual natures. In some, the brain is like a mirror, which reflects the hidden things and sends back radiations over humanity. Others hear the great mysterious voice, the rustling of the words which explain the past, enlighten the present, announce the future. Under a thousand forms, the invisible penetrates the senses and imposes itself:

"To some of us," says Flammarion,[405] "as to Goethe, in certain hours of passion, this subtle communication becomes apparent with luminous clearness. With others, as with [Roger] Bacon, this conviction is slowly formed along lines revealed by the daily study of mankind."

In a medieval book called *Opus Majus*, by British Doctor Mirabilis (Admirable Doctor), Friar Roger Bacon,[406] all the great inventions of our time are predicted and described.

Gerolamo Cardano, in his *De Varietate Rerum* (ch. VIII, 3), congratulated himself on possessing the "gifts" which allow one to fall into ecstasy at will, see foreign objects through the eyes of the spirit, and be informed about the future.

Schiller declared that his finest thoughts were not of his own creation; they came to him so quickly and with such force that he had difficulty grasping them quickly enough to transcribe them.

The mediumistic faculties of Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish philosopher, are attested by the famous letter of Kant to Mademoiselle Charlotte de Knoblich. In this letter the author of *Critique of Pure Reason* reports that Mrs. Harteville, the widow of the German ambassador at

Stockholm, obtained a communication from her deceased husband through the baron of Swedenborg, concerning a precious document which remained unavailable despite assiduous research. It was concealed in a secret drawer, of which the deceased revealed the existence, known only to him.

The fire of Stockholm (Sweden), seen and described by Swedenborg, three hundred miles of distance, is also a proof of the power of his faculties. One can thus admit that his theories on invisible life are not the product of his imagination, but that they were inspired by real visions and revelations. As to the form in which he has described them, we must attach only a relative importance. All seers find themselves in the need to translate their perception of the invisible with the forms, images, expressions imposed by their education and familiar for the environment in which they live. Thus, according to times and latitudes, they will give to the inhabitants of the other world the names of gods, angels, demons, genii or spirits.

Let us now take a look at the great writers of the nineteenth century.

Chateaubriand and his sister Lucile have the same rights to be considered as inspired ones:

"The first inspiration of the poet, his first muse," we are told,[407] "was his sister Lucile. There is no doubt that the years spent near this being of reverie and of prayer have left their mark in the heart of the young man, moved, as he reminds us (in *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*), by the sudden abatements of this nature, at once ecstatic and desolate. This mysterious girl, half somnambulist, almost endowed with the second sight, like an inhabitant of the Hebrides (Scotland), passed through the childhood of Chateaubriand, as well as through the appearance of pain. She communicated her poetic malaise to her brother already so tormented; it was thus that she entered in half in all the conceptions of the poet. In this chorus of white visions, we shall find her everywhere. Did she not, with her odd predictions, furnished him with the type for the famous *Velléda* episode?"

Balzac, in his books *Ursule Mirouët*, *Séraphîta*, *Louis Lambert*, *La Peau de Chagrin* (*The Skin of Sorrow* or *The Wild Ass's Skin*), etc., has touched all the problems of invisible life, occultism and magnetism. All these questions were familiar to him. He treated them with real mastery at a time when they were still little known. He was not only a profound observer, but also a seer in the highest sense of the word.

Edgar Quinet had the same brilliant intuitions, if we are to believe Mr.

Ledrain, a very skeptical literary critic, who thus spoke in an article in *L'Éclair*, on the occasion of his centenary in 1903:

"At the same time that the visible world enchanted him, his eyes were also fixed on the invisible world. He was an ardent Spiritualist, like all those of his generation; like Lamartine, like Victor Hugo, like Michelet. He believed in the 'immortal city of souls,' the homeland, from which no man can be banished. The breath of some preternatural country takes him at certain moments and carries him, as on wings, towards infinite spaces. Read his speech on his mother's grave; or that on his son-in-law Georges Mourouzi's; what accents from above! He is a *nabi* (prophet), rising above all priests and speaking in the name of the Lord, as invested with a direct mission."

Lamartine, in *Jocelyn*, in *The Fall of an Angel*; and Jean Reynaud, in *Terre et Ciel*; can also be considered to be inspired writers.

Lamartine wrote to Arlès Dufour, in order to defend himself from a reproach made by Enfantin: "I have my object; he does not suspect it; no one knows who, except me. I move in a pace that comports with it, not faster. This goal is impersonal and divine only. It will be revealed later. Meanwhile, how does he want me to speak the pure language of the spirits to men of flesh and bones?"[408]

Michelet, at certain hours, seems to be under the control of some unknown power. Listen to him, speaking of his book *History of the Revolution*:

"Never since my Maid of Orleans [Joan of Arc] had I had such a ray from above, such a luminous escape from heaven ..."

"Unforgettable days; who am I to have narrated them? I do not know yet, I will never know how I could reproduce them. The incredible happiness of recovering them so palpitating with life, so burning, after sixty years, had enlarged my heart with heroic joy."

As a inspired spokesperson for the invisible, Victor Hugo is no less eloquent: "God manifests himself to us in the first degree through the life of the universe, and in the second through the thought of man," he said; "The poet is a priest."[409] He believes in communicating with the dead. His Spiritist seances on the island of Jersey, with Mme. de Girardin and Auguste Vacquerie, described by him in his "Le Miettes de l'Histoire," the verses he addressed to the spirit of Moliere, and those, incredibly ironic ones, that "The Shadow of the Sepulcher" dictated to him by the feet of a table.[410]

Undoubtedly, in regard to men of genius, he rejects the "Error of all times

in wishing to give the human brain external auxiliaries." Such an opinion – *Antrum adjuvat vatem* [411] – hurts his pride. But he will contradict himself in many cases. Or is it not he who wrote:

"The dead are living humans meddling in our affairs ... Sometimes one feels their invisible arrows passing by."

On Émilie de Putron's grave he uttered these now famous words:

"The dead are invisible, but they are not absent."

On the ancestors' armchair that was seen in the dining-room of Hauteville house, he had written these expressive words: *Absentes adsunt*.[412] Was it not a constant evocation of those he had loved? All his works are interspersed with superb invocations to the "Voices of the shadows," to the "voices of the abyss," to the "voices of space," and so on.

Certainly, I do not pretend to say that Hugo was a medium in the narrow sense of the word, since many people are capable of obtaining phenomena of little value. His powerful mind could not be reduced to the secondary role of interpreting the thoughts of others. What I meant was the Hereafter does spread its radiations and harmonies. They fecundated his genius; they extended to infinity the horizons of his thought.

With German poet Heinrich Heine, this collaboration with the invisible is translated in a sensible way. This is what he said in the preface to his tragedy, *W. Ratcliff*:

"I wrote William Ratcliff in Berlin during the last days of 1821, under the lime trees of the Lidernallee, while the sun was shining with its rather dull rays over the roofs covered with snow, and the trees were stripped of their leaves. I wrote without interruption and without deletions. As I wrote, it seemed to me That I could hear something like a rustle of wings above my head. When I told this to my friends, young Berlin poets, they looked at each other in a singular manner, and declared unanimously that they had never noticed anything of the kind while writing."[413]

What is most remarkable in Heine's tragedy is that it is entirely spiritual; the development of the plot and its denouement are based on the reciprocal influence of the earthly world and the world of spirits.

Many famous authors have been mediums without even knowing it. Others have been aware of this. French novelist Paul Adam, one of the most fervent writers of our time, confessed without hesitation:[414]

"I have been a powerful writing medium. The Force which inspired me

had such physical strength, that it compelled the free pencil to roll upward the paper tilted by my hand, despite the laws of gravity. This Force saw not only in the past that I did not know, but it had the prescience of the future. Its predictions were astounding in their realization, since nothing, absolutely nothing, could make me foresee them."

Not all of them have this frankness and prefer to give credit to their own personal merits; but, in general, the great geniuses readily admit that they are governed by superior intellects.

In a number of writers of our time we find this sort of obsession with the invisible. Hoffmann, Bulwer Lytton, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Guy de Maupassant, etc., have known and expressed it in some of their works. They have participated, to varying degrees, in this communion of souls, from which emerges, unveiled, the immense mystery of life and the spiritual plane.

We see, in all the fields of art and thought, the heavens vivify the Earth. The great musicians, the princes of harmony, seem to have been more directly still under the influence of mediumship. Not only the precocity of some – Mozart, for example – attests the principle of reincarnations; but there are also, in the life of the celebrated composers, phenomena that are absolutely mediumistic, which it would be too long to narrate here. Their history is well known to everyone.

We have seen above (Chapter XIV) that Mozart and Beethoven have borne witness to the otherworldly influences that inspired their genius. The same could be said of Haydn, Handel, Gluck, and others. Chopin had visions that sometimes terrified him. His finest compositions: his *Funeral March*, his *Nocturnes*, were written in complete darkness. All Wagner's work rests on a background of spirituality. This is expressed as much in the words of *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal*, as in all the music itself.

Illustrious individuals were, for the most part, writing mediums. It was on their waking, most often, that they composed their works. Dante called the morning "the divine hour," because it is the hour when one expresses the inspirations of the night. There are beautiful things to say about the nocturnal revelations made to geniuses. The ancients knew the mystery of this initiation; they said: "The day is for men; night belongs to the gods." During

sleep, the higher souls ascend to sublime spheres; they plunge into the radiations of divine thought, into an ocean of sonorities and harmonious vibrations; they discover the principles and causes of the eternal symphony. Francis of Assisi and Nicholas of Tolentino were plunged into ecstasy for having heard a distant echo, some lost notes of celestial concerts or, in other words, the infinite orchestra of the worlds. Mozart's Requiem has no other origin. Only a few hours before his corporeal release, the master penciled with a hand already frozen that funeral hymn which was the last manifestation of his genius. It was fitting that the illustrious medium, who had all his life perceived the melodious voices of the spiritual plane, expired in a last harmony, and that his soul exhaled in a superhuman complaint, in ineffable accents, which only the great inspired ones, by the threshold of the glorious worlds are capable of.

Italian painter and architect Raphael said that his most beautiful works had been inspired and shown in a sort of vision.

Johann Heinrich von Dannecker, a German sculptor, stated that the idea of his *Christ*, a masterpiece, had been communicated to him through an inspiration, in a dream, after having sought for it in vain during his hours of study.

One night Albert Dürer was watching and wondering. He wanted to paint the four evangelists, and having retouched the painting, which did not render the ideal he desired, he threw open his window and contemplated the stars. Inspiration came to him at that moment of sadness; he invoked his spiritual models. The moon shone on the monuments and gables of the cathedrals of Nuremberg. He said: "You have allowed men to transform rocks into harmonious and majestic buildings, permit me to render on the canvas those saints whom I carry in my soul."

Then he saw that the church of St. Sebald was colored with fire and blue clouds forming a background on which the imposing figures of four evangelists were drawn, and said: "These are the features which I have in vain sought to trace!" Is this not a case of mediumship and, in our days, do we not see the same fact being reproduced with Hélène Smith, the medium from Geneva?[415]

There would be much to write about the part of high inspirations in the arts.

Should we not also see the influence from above in that power of the verb

which raises and drags the crowds, as the wind raises sea waves? This seems to be especially manifest in orators who can reach a hight flight, and who, at certain moments, are as raised from the ground and carried away on broad wings; or in those improvisers at prestigious events, possessing harmonious language, whose speech flows fleetingly in what Cicero called “the river of discourse.”

The power of healing through one’s gaze, touch, and the laying on of hands is also one of the forms by which spiritual action is exerted over the world. God, the source of all life, is the principle of physical health, as it is of moral perfection and supreme beauty. Some individuals, by prayer and magnetic élan, attract this influx to themselves, this radiance of the divine force which drives off the impure fluids that cause of so much suffering. The spirit of charity, of devotion verging on sacrifice, of forgetfulness of self, is the condition necessary to acquire and preserve this power, one of the most wonderful ones bestowed by God on humans.

This power, this superiority of the mind over matter, have asserted itself in all ages. Vespasian cured by the laying on of hands an almost blind man and another with a paralyzed hand.[416] The cures obtained by Apollonius of Tyana are no less celebrated. All are surpassed by those of Christ and his apostles, who operated under the same laws.

In modern times, circa the 1830s, a holy Bavarian priest, the Prince Alexander of Hohenlohe, possessed this admirable faculty. He always proceeded by praying and invocation to God, and the fame of his cures resounded throughout Europe. He healed the blind, the deaf, and the dumb; a crowd of sick and infirm persons, constantly renewed, besieged his dwelling house.

In France, other thaumaturgists attracted crowds of people full of sorrow and despair. Cahagnet, Puységur, du Potet, Deleuze and their disciples did prodigies. Even today, many healers, more or less profitably, take care of themselves with the help of the spirits.[417]

These simple people, these believers, are puzzles and embarrassing points for official medical science, so impotent in the face of pain, notwithstanding its proud pretensions. Charcot, a subtle observer, at the end of his life

recognized their power. He wrote, in an English journal, a study which have become famous, *Faith-Healing*. Indeed, faith, which is itself a source of life, can suffice to restore health. The facts demonstrate it with irresistible eloquence. In the most diverse circles, good men: the cure of Ars, Mr. Vigne, a Protestant of the Cévennes, Russian Orthodox Father John of Kronstadt; others still, both in the Catholic sanctuaries, as well as in those of Islam or India, have obtained innumerable cures by prayer.

This has proved it: above all human churches and detached from all rites, sects, and formulas, there is a supreme focus which the soul can attain through the impetus of faith, which draws from forces, assistance, and lights that cannot be appreciated or understood by those who ignore God and do not want to pray. In reality, magnetic healing requires neither passes nor special formulas, but only the ardent desire to relieve others, the sincere and profound calling of the soul to God, the source and principle of all forces.

From these considerations one fact emerges: that, perpetually, in all ages, the invisible world has collaborated with the world of the living, showering upon it its inspirations, coming to its aid. The miracles of the past are the phenomena of the present; names alone change, spiritual facts are eternal.

Thus all is explained, clarified and understood. A thinker will lean over the immense framework of the past, with the torch of New Spiritualism in his hand. And in this light, from the depths of ages, the dust of history's debris will shine in his eyes like sparks of gold.

Genius, as we have said, is a mediumship; individuals of genius are mediums of varying degrees and in different orders. There is in their faculties not only a great variety of forms, but also a gradation and a hierarchy, as in all domains of life and nature.

Individuals of genius, voluntarily or not, consciously or not, are in contact with the Hereafter; they receive the most powerful emissions. Invisible inspirers assist them and collaborate in their works.

I may add that genius is a painful mediumship. As we have seen, the greatest mediums have been the greatest martyrs. The death of Socrates, the

torture of Jesus, the pyre of Joan of Arc are some of many redemptive calvaries that dominate history.

All great humans have suffered. They were, to use a famous expression, “the illustrious persecuted.” Every human who rises, isolates himself or herself; and the isolated being suffers is misunderstood. A fine book to write would be one on the misfortunes of genius; we should see how painful was the destiny of all the Christs of this world: Orpheus dismembered by the bacchantes; Moses, buried alive perhaps in the caves of Mount Nebo; Isaiah, sawn in half by the people;[418] Socrates, executed by poisonous hemlock; Columbus, chained like a felon; Tasso, interned as a lunatic; Dante, wandering through the ups and downs of his exiles; Milton, as poor as Job and as blind as Homer; Camões, dying on a wretched hospital bed. The great inventors: Galileo, incarcerated by the Inquisition; Solomon of Caus, Bernard Palissy, Jenner, Papin, Fulton, and so many other treated as madmen! Sublime madness then, like that of Jesus, which Herod had crowned with thorns and clothed in purple robes as a sign of derision! Such is the history of the geniuses of humanity. There are mysterious laws, formerly known by wise humans, now forgotten, and which contemporary Spiritualist science must reconstitute through a long labor that includes many contradictions; for it is the punishment inflicted on all such nations to reconquer, at the cost of their own sweat, blood, and tears, the lost truths and forgotten revelations. However let us return to the psychical study of genius.

Genius is a mediumship; it has its essential character which is intermittence. A superior individual is never in his or her usual state; the sublime if left uninterrupted as a continuous stream would burst their brain. Minds of genius sometimes take ordinary rest. There are even some who have been inspired only once in their lives; they wrote an immortal work, then rested.

Numerous examples demonstrate this, a genius’s mediumship resembles the mediumship of incorporation. It is preceded by a sort of trance, which has been called “the torment of inspiration.” The *mens divinior* [divine breath] does not penetrate with impunity the mortal being; it imposes itself, as it were, with violence. A sort of fever, a sacred shudder, makes the person whom the Spirit comes to visit tremble.[419] Signs, transports similar to those which agitated the pythia on her tripod, announce the arrival of the god: *Ecce deus!* [Behold god!] All the great inspired poets, orators, musicians, artists,

have experienced this sibylline excitement; some of them even died, Raphael was consumed in the flower of his years. There are young predestined individuals whose fragile envelope has not been able to bear the power of superhuman inspirations which fell at the dawn of their genius, like the delicate flower that the first ray of sunshine kills.

The Church[420] admits this doctrine; it teaches that among its sacred authors, some are directly inspired, like the prophets, others simply assisted. This distinction between inspiration and assistance is represented for us by the different degrees of mediumship. Let me recall in this regard what I have explained elsewhere.[421] The Church was Spiritist during the first three centuries. The Epistles of St. Paul and the Book of Acts of the Apostles are classic textbooks of mediumship. Scholastic theology has come to disturb the pure source of inspirations, introducing elements of error into the magnificent synthesis of hieratic doctrine of the early Christian ages. A book attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite is all imbued with Spiritism. The life of the saints overflows with mediumistic lifeblood which was fulfilled by Christ and his apostles in the primitive Church. The advice of St. Paul to the Corinthians are recommendations of a group leader to his initiates. Thomas Aquinas said that he had commented on these epistles under the very dictation of the apostle, and conversed with an invisible personage; at night his cell filled with a strange light, and his disciple Reginald, being dead, returned three days afterwards to tell him what he had seen “in heaven.” Albertus Magnus laid out his incomparable science of nature by means of some sort of mediumistic infusion; this science was suddenly withdrawn, as it had been communicated to him; and at the age of forty he became as ignorant as a child.

Abbot Joachim of Flores and John of Parma, his disciple, were instructed by visions, and wrote the *Eternal Gospel* under the dictation of a spirit, which contained in germ all the revelation of the future. The Renaissance literati, Marsilio Ficino, of Florence; Pico della Mirandola; Jerome Cardan; Paracelsus; Pomponazzi; and the mighty Savonarola have all plunged into mediumship as a sort of spiritual ocean.

The seventeenth century also had some glorious inspiration. Pascal had ecstasies; Malebranche wrote in the darkness of a closed cell his *Concerning the Search after Truth*. Descartes himself tells us that his ingenious system of methodical doubt was revealed to him by a sudden intuition which crossed his mind with the rapidity of a flash of lightning.[422] It is to Cartesian

philosophy, thus born of a kind of medieval revelation, that we owe the emancipation of modern thought, the enfranchisement of the human mind imprisoned for centuries in the scholastic fortress, a veritable prison tower of monastic and Aristotelian despotism.

These great enlightened individuals of the seventeenth century are the forerunners of Mesmer, St. Martin, Swedenborg, the Saint-Simonian school and all the apostles of the humanitarian doctrine, while awaiting, so to speak, Allan Kardec and the current Spiritualist school, whose innumerable focal points are lit up on all the corners of the universe.

Therefore the phenomenon of mediumship has filled the ages. Sometimes shining brightly, sometimes dark and veiled, depending on the state of mind of the peoples. It never ceased to guide humanity in its earthly pilgrimage. All great works are children of the Hereafter. Everything that has revolutionized the world of thought, bringing about some intellectual progress, was born of an inspiring breath.

In the hierarchy of intelligences we encounter a magnificent solidarity. Throughout the centuries, the great inspired ones have passed the torch of revealing and glorious mediumship to one another. Humanity is still marching by the twilight of these revelations, by the clarity of these fires lit up on the heights of history by predestined pathfinders.

This view of General History is grand and brings consolation; it takes on the appearance and character of a sacred drama. God sends his thought to the world through messengers who constantly descend the degrees of the ladder of beings and come to convey divine communications to humans, like the stars send their subtle radiations through the profound darkness. Thus everything is connected on the universal plane. The higher worlds educate the lower worlds. The celestial spirits are the instructors of backward human spirits. The ascension of worlds of trial and expiations into worlds of regeneration is the most beautiful spectacle that can be offered to the admiration of thinkers.

From the highest and most luminous spheres to the most obscure, and lowest regions; from the most radiant spirits to the grossest individuals, divine thought descends in a cascade of light and an outpouring of love.

By this system of beliefs, or rather by this vision of the intellectual solidarity of human beings, we understand all that we owe to our spiritual ancestors, to these glorious mediums who have sown, through the painful labors of their genius, what we have reaped, and which others will collect even better in the future.

These thoughts ought to inspire us and fill us with a grateful piety for the august dead who have ensured the progress of the world.

We live in troubled times where we no longer feel these things. Very few among our contemporaries rise to these summits, from which, like a promontory, we perceive the vast ocean of ages, the harmonious ebb and flow of events.

The Church, which has become a political institution, has not been able to apply the profound truths and laws of the unseen to the moral needs of humanity. Its priests are powerless to lift us up, for they have forgotten the sacred words of ancient wisdom and the secret of the “mysteries.” Modern science has so far been degraded in materialism and experimental positivism. Universities do not know how to dispense, through the voice of its professors, the regenerative teaching which may quench souls and prepare them for the great struggles of life. Secret societies, too, have lost the sense of the traditions that justified their existence; they still practice their rites, but the soul which gave life to them went to other heavens.

It is time for a new breath to come all over the world and give life to these worn-out forms and dried-up carcasses. Only the science and the revelation of spirits can give humanity the exact notion of their destiny.

A great work is being carried on for this purpose at the present time; a powerful work in preparation. The constant and thorough study of the invisible world, which is also the world of causes, will be the great resource and an inexhaustible reservoir for nourishment and life. Mediumship is the key. By studying it, humans will arrive at true science and true belief, which do not exclude one another, but unite to fertilize each other. In this way a more intimate communion will also be established between the living and the dead, and more abundant succor will flow from the spiritual planes toward us. Tomorrow’s human being will understand and bless life; humans will no longer be afraid of death. Through our efforts, we will realize the reign of God, that is to say, a reign of peace and justice on Earth. And, at the end of this stage, its last evening will be luminous and calm as the setting of

constellations at the time when the morning dawn is beginning to shine on the horizon.

Afterword

If you came here after reading this remarkable book, the following notes may be of interest. Here are some relevant but brief annotations.

First there is the slightly staggering number of footnotes, 307 in the French original, expanded and updated to 422 in this English version; clearly marked as translator's notes when this is the case. They shed light on a number of terminology and historical issues which would otherwise remain obscure or incomprehensible.

Needless to say, a book with so many external references does rely heavily on other books and publications. It just so happens that many of the sources used by the author were often American or British. In this translation, every effort and resource was used to guarantee that this quoted material was absolutely consistent and loyal to their English originals, however rare and hard to find.

The same can be said of passages extracted from German, Italian, and other idioms. One notable exception was A. Aksakof's *Animisme et Spiritisme*, a book originally published in Russian but translated very freely into French by B. Sandow in the 19th century. There is no English version of the original, so I translated it from the French instead, as it should mirror exactly L. Denis's citations of a book he often consulted in French.

The term "*incorporation*" was invariably used by the author a century ago, hence the numerous reminders that in modern Spiritism the word *psychophony* is much to be preferred when referring to all sorts of mediumistic speaking, as it was established that no actual embodiment occurs during spirit manifestations.

Next, there was the case of chapter VII, "Spiritism and Women," which could easily sound patronizing and even controversial in this day and age. Suffice it to say in the author's defense, that when he wrote those lines a great number of his female Spiritist peers were being persecuted, incarcerated and brutally beaten by police officers all over the world – not because they were Spiritists but because they were heroic *suffragettes*.

The subject was taboo at the time, so Léon Denis apparently found a way to render homage to those modern martyrs without drawing the attention of

the authorities. Very rich women and aristocrats, usually widows, were the only exception to the rule that dictated their roles as first and foremost family caregivers and submissive housewives. Among pioneering Spiritists like L. Denis, women were however treated as independent, free individuals who quickly came to prominence.

Lastly, it will not come amiss to point out that, despite the horrors of World War I, which L. Denis saw and endured firsthand, he wrote still in full hope of humanity's success:

"*The infinite universe becomes our eternal homeland. A vast perspective of time unfolds before our eyes as the field of our labors, our studies, our progress. And once this certainty has penetrated our soul, no discouragement, no fear can reach us, either in this life or in the innumerable lifetimes which destiny compels us to traverse.*"(See Ch. XXI above)

Yet humanity seemed oblivious to these words. On September 1, 1939, twelve years after L. Denis had left this planet, World War II began. Again so much suffering to which he had long offered the ultimate antidote.

H.M.M.

[1](Trans. note) Latin phrase made famous by Hahnemann with the homeopathic axiom *similia similibus curantur* (like is cured by like), used to define the law of similars.

[2] (Trans. note) Another term for *psychical research*.

[3] (Trans. note) Translated from the author's preface to the last revised and augmented edition of the original *Dans l'Invisible* (Paris: Librairie des Sciences Psychologiques, 1922).

[4](Trans. note) Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), famous German physician and physicist.

[5] (Trans. note) Latent or subconscious memory.

[6] See the journal *Revue des Études Psychiques*, Paris, June 1904.

[7] Oliver LODGE, *Raymond or Life and Death* (London: Methuen & Co., 1916), pp. viii and 6.

[8] (Trans. note) See footnote 50 below.

[9] J. MAXWELL, *Metapsychical Phenomena* (Trans. L. I. Finch, London: Duckworth & Co. 1905), p. 12.

[10]Théodore FLOURNOY, *Esprits et Médiums: Mélanges de Métapsychique et de Psychologie* (Paris: Fishbacher, 1911. Reprint, New York: Cambridge, 2011), p. 204.

[11]*Ibid*., p. 543.

[12] See ROCHAS D'AIGLUN, *L'Extériorisation de la Sensibilité* (6th ed., Paris: Charconac, 1909), *passim*; and *L'Extériorisation de la Motricité* (4th ed., Paris: Charconac, 1906), *passim*.

[13] See Hyppolite BARADUC, *L'Âme Humaine: Ses Mouvements, Ses Lumières et l'Iconographie de l'Invisible Fluidique* (Paris: Carré, 1896), *passim*.

[14]See *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vols. I–XVII, 1882–1902, *passim*, London.

[15] (Trans. note) Published in English as *L'Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900).

[16]*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 10, p. 292, Paris, 1910.

[17]See W. CROOKES, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874), *passim*; A. Russel WALLACE, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* (rev. ed., London: George Redway, 1896), p. 231 *et seq.*; A. AKSAKOF (or AKSAKOV), *Animisme et Spiritisme* (French trans. B. Sandow, Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1895), ch. I.

[18] (Trans. note) The author invariably uses the term *incorporation* whereas in modern Spiritism the preferred term is *psychophony* (i.e., *speaking mediumship*), as there is no actual embodiment of the communicating spirit in the medium.

[19]See W. CROOKES, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–112 ; E. D'ESPÉRANCE, *Shadow Land* (London: George Redway, [1897]), ch. XXII; A. AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, ch. I; G. DELANNE, *Les Apparitions Matérialisées de Vivants et des Morts* (Paris: Leymarie, 1909).

[20] See A. Aksakof, *op. cit.*, pp. 127–138.

[21]*Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society*, vol. XV (1900–1901), pp. 16-38. See also M. SAGE, *Mrs. Piper* (Trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904), *passim*.

[22]*Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society*, vol. XIII (1897-1898), pp. 284-335 *et seq.*

[23]*Ibid.*, vol. XVI (1901), pp. 11, 344–366; see also G. DELANNE, *Recherches sur la Médiumnité* (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), p. 355.

[24] *Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society*, vol. XVI (1901), p. 242.

[25] See P. JANET (Ed.), *IV^e Congrès International de Psychologie* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901), pp. 113–121; or Myers's original text in *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XVII (1901-1903), pp. 67-74.

[26] (Trans. note) Former French protectorate (1894–1904) now known as Benin, a republic in West Africa.

[27] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), p. 241 *et seq.*

[28] History also tells us that apparition and materialization phenomena are not as unknown as Charles Richet might think.

[29] F. W. H. MYERS, *Human Personality*, published in two volumes (London, New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903).

[30] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 287.

[31] (Trans. note) Abridged English version published as *Spiritism and Psychology* (Trans. H. Carrington, New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1911), pp. 66-67.

[32] (Trans. note) Excerpt trans. *apud* M. BORCH-JACOBSEN, S. SHAMDASANI, *The Freud Files* (New York: Cambridge, 2012), "Introduction: the past of an illusion," p. 9.

[33] C. LOMBROSO, *Hypnotisme et Spiritisme* (French trans. C. Rossigneux. Paris: E. Flammarion, 1910). (Trans. note: Published in English as C. LOMBROSO, *After Death – What?* [Trans. W. S. Kennedy. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1909].).

[34] (Trans. note) That amount would be worth well over five thousand US dollars in today's value.

[35] (Trans. note) Turin: Unione Tipografica Editrice, 1909. See footnote 33 above for the French and English translations.

[36] C. LOMBROSO, *After Death – What?* (Trans. W. S. Kennedy. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1909), "Preface."

[37] (Trans. note) The terms *Spiritualism* (especially *New Spiritualism*) and *Spiritism* are used interchangeably by the author.

[38] (Trans. note) *Typtology* or *rappings* was an early method of spirit communication in which spirits used raps to convey messages.

[39] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902).

[40] (Trans. note) *Procrustean bed*: any arbitrary standard enforced uniformly without regard to variety or individuality.

[41] Such has been the case of W. Crookes, Russell Wallace, Lodge, Aksakof, Myers, Hodgson, Lombroso, and many others.

[42] *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society* (London: Longmans, 1871), p. 168.

[43] See G. DELANNE, *Evidence for a Future Life* (Trans. H. A. Dallas, London: P. Wellby, 1904), part I, ch. IV, pp. 70–98.

[44] (Trans. note) Nowadays universally referred to as *out-of-body experience* (OBE), after Robert Allan MONROE's book *Journeys out of the Body* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971).

[45] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, "Reproduction de formes matérialisées ... ," p. 154.

[46] The perispirit or subtle body was known to the ancients. Most Church Fathers affirm its existence. See L. DENIS, *Christianisme et Spiritisme* (New Ed., Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1910), "Notes complémentaires," no. 9, p. 454.

[47] (Trans. note) Another term for *perispirit*.

[48] See H. DURVILLE, *Le Fantôme des Vivants* (Paris: Librairie du Magnétisme, 1910). See also the April issue of *The Annals of Psychical Science*, vol. VII, London, Jan.–Dec. 1908.

[49] "Echoes and News" in *The Annals of Psychical Science*, vol. VII, p. 338, London, Jan.–Dec. 1908.

[50] (Trans. note) Same as *seances*, hence *sitters* (participants).

[51] (Trans. note) In the author's time, the term *somnambulism* was still often used to describe a trance-like state with no connection whatsoever to *sleepwalking*.

[52] See T. FLOURNOY, *From India to the Planet Mars* (Trans. D. B. Vermilye, London & New York: Harper & Bros., 1900), *passim*.

[53] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), pp. 349–350.

[54] See L. DENIS, *Life and Destiny* (Trans. E. W. Wilcox, New York: G. H. Doran Co., 1918), ch. XIII, "Renovation of the Memory," p. 162 *et seq.*

[55] (Trans. note) Former term for *ultraviolet light* or radiation.

[56] The great chemist and physicist W. Crookes set up a classification in which sound vibrations extend from the 5th to the 15th degree on a scale, according to their intensity and pitch. Electricity and magnetization range from the 20th to the 35th degree. From the 45th to the 50th, we have heat and the light. Beyond the 58th degree, cathode rays manifest themselves. Yet the gaps on the scale conceal many kinds of energies which remain unexplored, inaccessible to our senses.

[57] (Trans. note) Also referred to as *apportation* or *apporting*, nowadays popularly known as *teleportation* of physical objects.

[58] (Trans. note) *Psychometry* is the ability to discover facts about an event or person by simply touching inanimate objects associated with them.

[59] See in ch. X below, processes used in becoming a medium.

[60] (Trans. note) *Psychophony*. See footnote 18 above.

[61] Marcus Annaeus Lucanus (39–65 AD), Roman author.

[62] TACITUS, *Hist.*; SUETONIUS, *Augustus*; PLINY THE YOUNGER, *Letters*, Book VIII; CICERO, *De Divinatione*, 2; APULEIUS, *De Deo Socratis*; Ammianus MARCELLINUS, *Hist*ory (trans. C. D. Yonge, London: Bell & Sons, 1902), Book XXI, ch. XIV, par. 5, p. 270.

[63] PROCLUS, *Metaphysical Elements* (Trans. T. M. Johnson, Osceola, MO: Osceola, 1909), ch. V, "On the Ways and Means Whereby the Ascent of the Soul is Effected," pp. 175-190

[64] See Léon DENIS, *Christianisme et Spiritisme* (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1910), ch. V.

[65] See J. MICHELET, *La Sorcière – The Witch* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1863), *passim*; Joseph FABRE, *Procès de Condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris: Delagrave, 1884); FLAMMARION, in his preface to the French ed. of M. SAGE'S book *Mrs. Piper* (English ed. trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904), says: " The last victim of the trials of sorcery was Anna Göldi, executed at Glarus (Switzerland) on June 13, 1782. For fourteen centuries, more than half a million men and women were

executed on the pretext of witchcraft." (Trans. note: Date of A. Göldi's execution corrected above to reflect new findings by the Anna-Göldi-Stiftung [Anna Göldi Foundation], Switzerland.)

[66] (Trans. note) The third Council of Mâcon held in France in 565 AD is supposed to have "denied that women have a soul." This claim, regarded as false by modern scholars, was later picked up and exploited by Protestant philosopher and writer Pierre Bayle (1647–1706) in his anti-Catholic pamphlets.

[67] (Trans. note) The author speaks as a Frenchman, hence his constant allusions to the Celts and the Gauls.

[68] (Trans. note) *Psychophony*. See footnote 18 above.

[69] C. DAWBARN, *The Science of Spirit Return* (Springfield, MA: Star Publishing Co., 1899), pp. 4–5.

[70] (Trans. note) Jacques-Henri BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE (1737-1814), *Journey to Mauritius* (Trans. J. Wilson, Oxford: Signal Books, 2002).

[71] (Trans. note) See footnote 57 above.

[72]See the experiments of T. FLOURNOY in his book *From India to the Planet Mars* (London and New York: Harper & Bros., 1900); and the judicious criticism of Dr. Metzger. (Trans. note: For Dr. Metzger's objections see H. F. ELLENBERGER, *The Discovery of the Unconscious* [New York: Basic Books Inc., 1970], p. 782.)

[73] See ch. VIII above, "Laws of Spirit Communication."

[74] A. Russel WALLACE, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* (rev. ed., London: George Redway, 1896), p. 155.

[75]See Robert Dale OWEN, *The Debatable Land* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1872), p. 482 *et seq.*; AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme* (French trans. B. Sandow), p. 547. Many other examples could be cited. Dr. CYRIAX, director of the *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter* in Berlin, obtained mechanical writing only at the 21st sitting. Several members of my group had to do preparatory exercises, tracing signs and scribbling gibberish for several months before obtaining legible messages.

[76] (Trans. note) See footnote 38 above.

[77] See Part Two, ch. XVIII below.

[78] (Trans. note) *Psychophony*. See footnote 18 above.

[79] (Trans. note) See footnote 51 above.

[80] See Part Two, ch. XIX below.

[81] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme* (French trans. B. Sandow), p. 243. See also Part Two, ch. XX, below.

[82] (Trans. note) F. Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1902), vol. II, Book III, "Spiritualism in England," ch. IX, "Science and Superstition," pp. 151-160..

[83] See Part Two, ch. XXI, below.

[84] (Trans. note) Back in the early 1900s and even after WWI, England and France were still plagued by "class consciousness."

[85] (Trans. note) A small board supported on casters and fitted with a pencil, used for automatic writing in seances.

[86]So called because our mediums saw this spirit clothed in a blue veil.

[87] (Trans. note) See footnote 37 above.

[88] (Trans. note) *Out-of-body experience* (OBE or OOBE). See also footnote 44 above.

[89] *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society* (London: Longmans, 1871), pp. 163–164.

[90] (Trans. note) *Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900) pp. 339, 341–342, 350–351, 353–354, 365–366, 380–381, 388, 396–397.

[91] vol. II (London, May 28, 1884), pp. 159-160.

[92] *Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900) pp. 330, 414–417.

[93] (Trans. note) Reproduced in *The Annals of Psychical Science*, vol. VIII, no. 50, pp. 322–323, London, April–June 1909.

[94] See ch. VIII above.

[95] C. FLAMMARION, *Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900) pp. 266, 269, etc.

[96] (Trans. note) The Danish couple Julius and Agnes Zancig later confessed that their act was actually a trick and published their secret code and methods in a British newspaper in 1924.

[97] See the experiments of the Baron DU POTET DE SENNEVOY (*Expériences Magnétiques à l'Hôtel-Dieu de Paris*, *passim*); the magnetizer LAFONTAINE (*L'Art de Guérir*); Doctors C. RICHET and OCHOROWICZ (*La Suggestion Mentale*); Dr. MOUTIN (*Le Diagnostic de la Suggestibilité*); Mr. E. BOIRAC, rector of the Académie de Grenoble (*Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 6, year 1896, pp. 56–58); C. FLAMMARION (*L'Inconnu – The Unknown*, ch. VI, pp. 228–309).

[98] C. FLAMMARION, *Death and Its Mystery – Before Death* (Trans. E. S. Brooks, London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1922), p. 155.

[99] See Pierre JANET, *Revue de Philosophie*, August 1886.

[100] *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Nancy*, April 1901.

[101] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VII, no. 4, pp. 193–194, Paris, October 1901.

[102] Cases of this nature can be found in F. W. H. MYERS, GURNEY and PODMORE, *The Phantasms of the Living* (London: Trübner & Co., 1886), pp. 179–182, 203 ; and in C. FLAMMARION, *L'Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900), pp. 90 –91, 116 –117.

[103] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme* (French trans. B. Sandow, Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1895), pp. 485, 490. See also other interesting cases in pp. 478, 487 and 505.

[104] Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde* (Paris: Dentu, 1880), p. 365.

[105] *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Nancy*, April 1901.

[106] *Light*, vol. III, no. 137, p. 366, August 18, 1883, *apud* AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 498.

[107] *Banner of Light*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 11, front page, Boston, Dec. 11, 1875, *apud* AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 516.

[108] "Singular Case of Double Appearance" in *Spiritual Magazine*, vol. III, p. 535, London, 1862, *apud* AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

[109] F. W. H. MYERS, GURNEY and PODMORE, *The Phantasms of the Living* (London: Trübner & Co., 1886).

[110] F. W. H. MYERS, GURNEY and PODMORE, *The Phantasms of the Living*, vol. I, ch. V, sect. 6, (30), p. 214.

[111] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 514–515.

[112] *Ibid.*, p. 521.

[113] TACITUS, *The Histories*, Book IV, ch. LXXXII.

[114] J. RIBET, *La Mystique Divine* (Paris: Poussielgue, 18 95), vol. II.

[115] See also AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 495; and DASSIER, *L'Humanité Posthume*, p. 14 7. MYERS *et al.*, *The Phantasms of the Living* also relates numerous cases of apparitions of dying and dead people, coinciding with their deaths.

[116] Reproduced in the journal *Revue Spirite*, Feb. 1909.

[117] Allan KARDEC, *The Mediums' Book* (Brasilia: ISC, 2011).

[118] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 509; ROCHAS D'AIGLUN, *Extériorisation de la Motricité* (experiments made with Eusapia by Misters Lombroso, Schiaparelli, Finzi, Ermacora, Wagner, C. Richet, Rochas d'Aiglun, Flammarion, Lodge, Ochorowicz, and others.)

[119] (Trans. note) *Psychophony*. See footnote 18 above.

[120] *The Spiritualist*, p. 97, London, Feb. 26, 1875. See also AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 512, the case of the somnambulistic medium Suzette B—, whose double appears to Dr. Ruffli and puts out his candle.

[121] *Light*, vol. III, no. 146, p. 458, Oct. 20, 1883; AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 493. See also MYERS *et al.*, *Phantasms of the Living*, vol. II, Additional ch., sect. 2, (685), pp. 671–672.

[122] See *The Spiritist Review* – 1860, pp. 129 and 141, March, and p. 307, June 1860 (New York: USSC, 2016); A. KARDEC, *Heaven and Hell*, ch. VIII, "Charles de Saint-G—"(New York: SAB, 2003); AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 4 70; *Banner of Light*, issues of Nov. 6 and Dec. 11, 18 75.

[123] Dr. H. BARADUC, *The Human Soul* (Paris: L.I.D.L.P.N., G. A. Mann, 1913). See also the Humber case (AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 78); the Judge Carter case (*Banner of Light*, p. 4, July 31, 1875); and the Stead case (*Borderland*, pp. 173–175, April 1896).

[124] [Transl. note] Excerpts straight from the *Revue Spirite*.

[125] *Genesis* 41:1–32.

[126] (Trans. note) See S. B. OATES, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of A. Lincoln* (New York: Mentor, 1978), pp. 462–463.

[127] (Trans. note) Now called Domremy-la-Pucelle in her honor.

[128] (Trans. note) See *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1913), vol. VIII, p. 410.

[129] (Trans. note) *ibid.*, pp. 410–412; R. B. INCE, *Joan of Arc* (London: W. Rider & Son, 1921), p. 31.

[130] (Trans. note) Wrongly referred to as "Coste di Porgo [sic]" in the English edition of the *Annals*.

[131] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), pp. 520–523.

[132] See also AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 605–608, relating several cases of apparitions of deceased persons, attested by seeing mediums and confirmed by transcendental photography or by photography alone, in the absence of any persons who knew the deceased, which excludes any hypothesis of someone's thoughts being read or photographed. Examples reported by "OXON" (S. MOSES), Down, Mrs. Conant, Mr Johnstone. Evidence of the identity of the apparitions cited by Dr. Thomson, Mr. Dow, Mr. Evans, Mr. Snipe and Mrs. Conant. See also A. Russel WALLACE, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, pp. 72–73.

[133]See my book *Christianisme et Spiritisme*, ch. V and note 6.

[134]Joseph Fabre, *Procès de Condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc* (2nd ed. rev. and cor., Paris: Delagrave, 1884), p. 159.

[135]Antoinette Bourdin, *La Médiumnité au Verre d'Eau* (Paris: Rouge, Dounon & Fresné, 1873), *passim*.

[136]*Apud* Jules Bois, *Le Monde Invisible* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1902), p. 274, reproducing F. W. H. Myers's concept of a "subliminal self." See also a remarkable case of hearing cited by Dr. A. Berget, examiner at the Faculty of Science in Paris, in C. Flammarion, *L'Inconnu – The Unknown*, pp. 57–59.

[137]See "A Memorable Seance" in *Mind and Matter*, vol. V, no. 51, p. 2, Philadelphia, PA, Nov. 10, 1883; "Phénomènes du Spiritisme" in the *Revue Spirite*, year 27, no. 7, pp. 228–231, Paris, April 1884.

[138] Letter published in Edward Holmes, *Life of Mozart* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1845), p. 329.

[139] (Trans. note) Apocryphal quotes of Mozart and friend – and the alleged episode with his daughter – are given by L. Denis in this and the next paragraph without citing any sources.

[140] Allan Kardec, in *The Spiritist Review* – 1859 (Trans. Luiz A. V. Cheim, New York: USSC, 2015), p. 218, reproduced the following communication given by Mozart's spirit about celestial music: "You create music on Earth; here, the whole nature produces melodious sounds ... You would have difficulty understanding it. We enjoy senses that you still don't have."

[141]See W. Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874), p. 62 *et seq*.; Karl Reichenbach, *Researches on Magnetism* ... (Trans. W. Gregory, London, Taylor, 1850), Part II, *passim*. Also, Prof. d'Arsonval, of the College of France, in a note presented at the Paris Academy of Sciences, on Dec. 28, 1903, said that, "The emission of rays by the nervous system may, under certain conditions, persist after the – at least apparent – death of the organism, and be increased by excitations of reflex origin." Further on, he adds: "I have reason to believe that unexpressed thought, one's attention and mental effort give rise to an emission of rays acting upon phosphorescence."

[142](Trans. note) See footnote 5 7 above.

[143]See Rochas d'Aiglun, *L'Extériorisation de la Sensibilité*, *passim*; Dr. J. Luys, "Phénomènes Produits par l'Action des Médicaments à Distance," in *L'Encéphale*, 7: 74–81, Paris, 1887. As early as 1860, Allan Kardec in *The Spiritist Review* – 1860 (New York: USSC, 2016), p. 129, affirmed that, according to the revelations made by the spirit of Dr. Vignal, our bodies emit luminous vibrations invisible to the material senses. That is what science has since confirmed. Therefore Spiritism has the merit of having been the first to propose, on this as on so many other points, theories of physics that science accepted only thirty years later, under the constant pressure of facts.

[144]See his presentation in *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), p. 99 *et seq.*.

[145]It has been objected that deviations of the needle may be explained by the calorific action of the fingers. Such action is evident to a certain extent but, apart from it, there exists a second action that can only be explained by vital dynamism. In fact, when the influence of heat is suppressed by an alumina shield or a piece of ice interposed between the apparatus and the hand, needle deviations still occur, and in opposite directions depending whether it is the right or the left hand that is presented. The position of the hand being the same in both cases, it is not the calorific vibrations which may act sometimes in one direction, sometimes in the other, since they radiate identically in the same manner in both cases. Moreover, the experiments of Mr. E. Geoffriault, described in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 11, p. 340 *et seq.*, Paris, 1901, have shown that all living beings, besides animal heat, exert an attractive action.

[146] W. Crookes, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 37.

[147] See Aksakof, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 27 *et seq*. At the end of Aksakof's book there is a series of photographic stills showing how the psychical force acts upon the mediumistic table and how it can, under the direction of spirits, take on the most varied forms.

[148] See Rochas d'Aiglun, *L'Extériorisation de la Sensibilité*.

[149] I made this experiment several times. The tips of the fingers should be placed on the plate immersed in the developer bath. Then, by elevating your thoughts in fervent, spontaneous prayer, you will find that the radiation will take a particular form on the plate, namely, that of a column of flames rising in a single shot. This demonstrates not only the action of our thoughts upon fluids, but also how our psychical dispositions are able to influence the environment in which we operate, and can change vibrational conditions.

[150] *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Nancy*, February 1901, p. 60.

[151] See two remarkable examples in C. Flammarion, *Inconnu – The Unknown*, pp. 412 & 414.

[152] (Trans. note) See footnote 38 above.

[153] For more details, see E. Hardinge, *Modern American Spiritualism*, *passim*; Aksakof, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 255, 293–294; A. L. Underhill, *The Missing Link in Modern Spiritualism* (New York: Knox & Co., 1885), p. 48; E. W. Capron, *Modern Spiritualism, Its Facts and Fanaticisms* (Boston: B. Marsh, 1855).

[154] From 1837 to 1840, a series of spirit manifestations had already taken place among the Shakers in the United States, but they made little impact.

[155] (Trans. note) See footnote 85 above.

[156] (Trans. note) See R. D. Owen in footnote 75 above.

[157] See previously cited books.

[158] E. Hardinge, *Modern American Spiritualism*, pp. 90–91.

[159] *Op. cit.*, p. 338.

[160] *Op. cit.* p. 97–98.

[161] [Transl. note] In modern parlance often referred to as *poltergeist* phenomena.

[162] See Carl du Prel, *Der Spiritismus* (Leipzig: Reclams Universal-Bibliothek, 1893), and his articles about haunted houses published in the German periodicals *Sphinx* and *Die Übersinnliche Welt*. (Trans. note: a detailed English translation of Prof. Arschauer's narrative is found in *Occult Review*, vol. XXX, No. 4, New York, Oct. 1919, pp. 213–217.)

[163] (Trans. note) See *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. XII, 1896 –1897, p. 326 *et seq.*, London, 1897.

[164] (Trans. note) See year vols. 1858 and 1960 of *The Spiritist Review* (New York: USSC, 2015–2016).

[165] (Trans. note) "Inst." then meant "of the current month."

[166] (Trans. note) *Apud* C. Lombroso, "Haunted Houses," in *The Annals of Psychical Science*, April–June 1909, p. 187.

[167] (Trans. note) C. Lombroso, "Haunted Houses," in *The Annals of Psychical Science*, January–June 1906, p. 370–371.

[168] Statement attributed to Mr. Daniel Berthelot by the French newspaper *Le Soir*, of December 20,

1896.

[169] A. Russel WALLACE, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 170; W. CROOKES, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, p. 62.

[170] Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde*, pp. 331–342; J. K. F. ZÖLLNER, *Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen* (Leipzig: Staakmann, 1878–1879).

[171] W. CROOKES, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–88.

[172] Louis GARDY, *Daniel Douglas Home, Le Médium: Sa Vie et Son Caractère* (Geneva and Paris: C. Eggimann, 189?), p. 41.

[173] Mrs. Dunglas HOME, *His Life and Mission* (London: Trübner & Co., 1888), ch. XII, p. 363.

[174] Mrs. Dunglas HOME, *op. cit.*, ch. IX, pp. 165–166.

[175] Dr. Paul GIBIER, *Le Spiritisme (Fakirisme Occidental)*(Paris: Octave Doin, 1896), p. 326.

[176] See L. DENIS, *After Death* (Trans. G. G. Fleurot and J. Korngold, New York: USSC, 2017), ch. 19, p. 172. In the seance proceedings, Prof. LOMBROSO attests that "a cabinet was advancing by itself in the middle of the room like a pachyderm."

[177] See *Revue des Études Psychiques*, Paris, Jan. 1902, p. 13.

[178] L. A. VASSALLO, *Nel Mondo degli Invisibili* (Rome: Voghera, 1902. Reprint, Rome: Gattopardo, 1972).

[179] (Trans. note) Material made of clay with oil, zinc oxide, wax, and sulfur, used by sculptors for modeling.

[180] See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 20, 1910, *passim*.

[181] R. Dale OWEN, *The Debatable Land*, ch. IV, pp. 484–485.

[182] (Trans. note) V. HUGO, *William Shakespeare* (Trans. M. B. Anderson, Chicago: McClurg & Co., 1887), p. 38.

[183] W. CROOKES, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19, 27, 88–89.

[184] (Trans. note) See *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society* (London: Longmans, 1871).

[185] Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde*, pp. 3–215.

[186] See Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde*, pp. 92–103.

[187] Some critics have thought it possible to explain the manifestations that took place in Beaune Street with a theory of unconscious or subliminal action on the part of the experimenters. If some of the phenomena obtained seem to justify this explanation, the whole of the facts do not fit this theory at all. There is frequent contradiction between the communicating spirit's views, opinions and knowledge, and those of the experimenters.

[188] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 437–444, a reproduction of the minutes and all the documents relating to these two cases of identity. See also the case of Louis Constant, quoted by Eugène NUS in his book *La Recherche des Destinées* (Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, n.d. [1891]), pp. 223–225.

[189] Again see AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 437–444.

[190] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), pp. 108–109. See also pp. 110, 120–121, for another four cases of identity obtained through the mediumistic table.

[191] (Trans. note) For political reasons, Victor Hugo was exiled from France from 1852 to 1870.

[192] (Trans. note) For a full reproduction of C. FLAMMARION's article, see the journal *L'Écho du Merveilleux*, Year 6, no. 124, pp. 85–88, Paris, March 1902; and an abridged version in the *Revue Spirite*, year 45, no. 5, pp. 262–268, Paris, May 1902.

[193] (Trans. note) C. RICHET'S full speech is in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. XIV, part XXVIII, I. "On the Conditions of Certainty," pp. 152–157, London, 1899.

[194](Trans. note) Although in today's Spiritism, *psychography* is synonymous with *mediumistic writing*, throughout this book the author uses it exclusively as a synonym for *direct writing*.

[195][*Positive Pneumatology: the Reality of the Spirit World, as well as the Phenomenon of Direct Writing by Spirits*] Bern: K. J. Wyss, 1870.

[196] See *Compte Rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900, pp.190–191.

[197] See especially *The Spiritualist*, London, September 21, 1877; *Light*, vol. XX, no. 995, February 3, 1900; the *Revue Spirite*, Paris, issues of June, July, August, September, November and December 1900. See also Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde*, pp. 268–272, 317 *et seq*.

[198] (Trans. note) M. A. OXON (i.e., W. Stainton MOSES), *Psychography* (2nd ed., London: Psychological Press Association, 1882), pp. 25 –26.

[199] (Trans. note) *Light*, vol. XX, no. 995, p. 50, Feb. 3, 1900, .

[200]OXON, *Psychography*, ch. II, pp. 55–56. See also *The Spiritualist*, London, Nov. 3, 1876, vol. 9, no. 14, p. 163, with a facsimile of the writing.

[201] (Trans. note) J. J. OWEN, *Psychography: Marvelous Manifestations* ... (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1893), pp. 207–210.

[202] See *Moniteur Spirite et Magnétique*, Paris, July 15, 1899.

[203]Paris: Octave Doin, 1896, part 3, ch. 1, sect. IV, pp. 340–378.

[204]See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), p. 201; and the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* vol. 8, 1898, p. 65 *et seq.*, with facsimiles of the writing on slates and that of Miss Moutonnier.

[205] See ch. X above, footnote 85.

[206] W. CROOKES, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* (London: J. Burns, 1874), pp. 87–88

[207]J. CARDAN, *De Rerum Varietate* [*On the Variety of Things*](Basle: Heinrich Petri, 1557), VIII, *passim*.

[208]4th English ed. reprint, New York: Peter Eckler, 1891.

[209] Carl DU PREL, *Der Spiritismus*, p. 44. Cited by AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 325.

[210] Communication given in French in HASDEU'S original.

[211] Excerpts taken from *The Annals of Psychical Science*, vol. VI, July-December, 1907, pp. 441–442

[212] W. Stainton MOSES, *Spirit Teachings* (London: Spiritualist Alliance, 1898)

[213] (Trans. note) "Spirit-amanuensis" was a term used by Stainton MOSES to signify *spirit control* (i.e., one of his several spirit mentors in charge of the written communications).

[214] Paris: Pommeret et Moreau, 1859.

[215] Paris: Auguste Ghio. 1883.

[216] Paris: Librairie des Sciences Psychologiques, 1889.

[217] Paris: Librairie des Sciences Psychiques, 1897.

[218] p. 92 *et seq*.

[219] See *Compte Rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900, pp. 189–190.

[220] (Trans. note) Léon Denis actually reproduced the French version of the article featured in the *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. XI, no. 4, p. 251, Paris, October 1905.

[221] (Trans. note) Original excerpts reproduced from *Light*, vol. XXVIII, no. 1413, pp. 63–64, London, February 8, 1908.

[222] (Trans. note) W. T. STEAD, *Bridging the River of Death* (Melbourne: E. W. Cole, 1918).

[223] *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vol. III, January 30, 1885, pp. 40–41, London.

[224] See French newspaper *L'Éclair*, October 10, 1900.

[225] (Trans. note) *Psychophonies*. See footnote 18 above.

[226] (Trans. note) See also footnote 51 above.

[227] *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XVII, part XLIII, March 1902, p. 41.

[228] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VI, pp. 213–215, Oct. 1900. See also the fine book by F. W. H. MYERS, *Human Personality* (London: Longmans, 1903), vol. II, ch. IX.

[229] (Chicago: J. R. Francis, 1904), ch. V, p. 125.

[230] Michel SAGE, *Mrs. Piper and the Society for Psychical Research* (Trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904), p. 172.

[231] (Trans. note) See footnote 18 above.

[232] (Trans. note) *Psychophony*. See footnote 18 above.

[233] M. SAGE, *Mrs. Piper* (Trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904). See also *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, vols. XIII–XVI, years 1897–1901, London.

[234] (Trans. note) See R. HODGSON, *The Proofs of Life After Death* (Boston: Thompson, 1902), p. 121

[235] (Trans. note) Old terms of Latin origin designating male and female "demons" that would descend upon and cohabit with sleeping persons.

[236] M. SAGE, *Mrs. Piper* ... (Trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904), pp. 169–187.

[237] M. SAGE, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[238] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

[239] As paraphrased and summed up by Dr. DUSART, "Nouvelle Série d'Observations ... par professeur James H. Hylop," in *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VII, no. 11, pp. 665–666, Paris, May 1902.

[240] Op. cit., p. 666.

[241] (Trans. note) Article of *The New York World*, March 3, 1900, excerpted in *The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, vol. 37, no. 10, p. 4, and no. 11, p. 2, San Francisco, March 8 and 15, 1900.

[242] "Twenty-five Years of Psychical Experience" by W. J. COLVILLE in *Light*, vol. XXII, no. 1106, p. 140, March 22, 1902.

[243] Extracted from *Le Spiritualiste*, vol. II, no. 4, p. 89, April 1858, New Orleans; article signed by J. BARTHET.

[244] (Trans. note) A general's tent; a governor's residence.

[245] (Trans. note) See footnote 86 above.

[246] (Trans. note) In psychoanalysis, *the unconscious*.

[247] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900, (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), "Résumé de travaux ... de Tours," pp. 520–523.

[248] See P. JANET, *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (6th ed., Paris: F. Alcan, 1916), *passim*; A. BINET, *Les Altérations de la Personnalité* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1892); T. FLOURNOY, *From India to the Planet Mars* (London, etc: Harper & Bros., 1900); H. TAINE, *On Intelligence* (Trans. T. D. Haye, New York: Holt & Co., 1889), vol. I, p. 3; T. RIBOT, *Les Maladies de la Personnalité* (8th ed., Paris: F. Alcan, 1899), p. 105.

[249] The works of modern physiologists, such as Doctors LUYS, FERRIER, BROCA, among others, have shown that each order of sensation – vision, hearing, taste, smell, etc. – is located in a special part of the brain. Now, one wonders how these diverse sensations can possibly be sought, gathered together, and assembled to spontaneously form and bring forth, without any incubation period, a second personality, which has its own tastes, fantasies and character, and which, once it has barely hatched, succeeds in using without any training or study such a complicated organism, with brain and a whole physical body, so as to employ speech and handwriting with perfect ease. This would be, as G. DELANNE (*Recherches sur la Médiumnité*, pp. 61–62) and AKSAKOF (*Animisme et Spiritisme*) declared, truly preternatural. And yet this quasi-miracle is what materialistic psychologists have proposed as an explanation!

[250] Dr. Gustave GELEY once said in *L'Être Subconscient – Essai de Synthèse* (2nd rev. ed, Paris: Alcan, 1905), p. 32: "Hysterical neuropathy is quite different: its symptoms are essentially mobile, inconstant; appearing, disappearing, varying without a cause or under the influence of multiple causes. Anesthesia, hyperesthesia, contractures and paralysis succeed one another, pass from one body region to another, escaping any prediction of extent or duration ... Hysteria still remains totally unexplained."

[251] *Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society* (London: Longmans, 1871), p. 163.

[252] See *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XVII (1901-1903), p. 70.

[253] T. FLOURNOY, *From India to the Planet Mars*, pp. 293–295.

[254] *Ibid*., ch. IV, sect. IV, pp. 116–138, and *passim*.

[255] (Trans. note) *Op. cit.*, p. 13 and *passim*.

[256] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris, 1902), pp. 349–350.

[257] See L. DENIS, *Le Problème de l'Être et de la Destinée* (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1908), p. 264 *et seq*.

[258] (Trans. note) The same as *universal cosmic fluid*.

[259] (Trans. note) See footnote 57 above.

[260] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 74.

[261] A. Russell WALLACE, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, (rev. ed., London: George Redway, 1896), p. 19 7.

[262] *Revue Parisienne*, June 1899.

[263] AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

[264] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 58–78.

[265] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[266] See L. DENIS, *After Death* (Trans. G. G. Fleurot and J. Korngold, New York: USSC, 2017), p. 168; W. CROOKES, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, *passim*; and AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95, 201–206, 255–256.

[267] (Trans. note) "Address of the President before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Bristol, 1898," in *Science*, vol. VIII, no. 201, November 4, 1898, pp. 609–610.

[268] F. MARRYAT, *There is No Death* (New York: National Book Co., [1891]), pp. 141, 143.

[269] See R. D. OWEN, *The Debatable Land* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1872), ch. IV, pp. 482–501.

[270] See P. JANET (Ed.), *IV^e Congrès International de Psychologie* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901), p. 675; also reproduced in full in the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 11, 1901 (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901), under the direction of Dr. DARIEX.

[271] *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 11, pp. 69–79.

[272] (Trans. note) This is the correct date according to the *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 11, p. 69.

[273] (Trans. note) *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 11, p. 88.

[274] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[275] See *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste International*, 1900 (Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1902), p. 241 *et seq.*

[276] (Trans. note) See footnote 5 7 above.

[277] *Op. cit.*, pp. 241–242.

[278] See ch. XVII above, p. 246 *et seq*.

[279] *Il Secolo XIX*, Genoa, Italy, articles published from June 21 to 25, 1901. (Trans. note: Abridged and adapted above by L. DENIS from L. A. VASSALLO, *Nel Mondo degli Invisibili* [Rome: Voghera, 1902. Reprint, Rome: Gattopardo, 1972].)

[280] (Trans. note) Denis mentions Lombroso instead, but *cf*. L. A. VASSALLO, *Nel Mondo degli Invisibili*, sect. "La quarta."

[281] *Revue des Études Psychiques*, Sept. 1902, p. 264. (Trans. note: For an English version see H. CARRINGTON, *Eusapia Palladino* [New York: Dodge & Co., 1909], ch. III, pp. 149–151.)

[282] (Trans. note) See W. Britton HARVEY, *Science and the Soul* (Warrnambool: Modern Print, 1908), p. 11.

[283] (Trans. note) C. LOMBROSO, *After Death – What?* (Trans. W. S. Kennedy. Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1909), pp. 67–69.

[284] L. DENIS, *Christianisme et Spiritisme* (New ed., Paris: Librairie de Sciences Psychiques, 1910), ch. IX,"La Nouvelle Révélation. Le Spiritisme et la Science," pp. 257–258.

[285] See *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VI, no. 11, p. 669, Paris, May 1901.

[286] (Trans. note) A *moulage* is a mold or impression of a (part of a) person or thing and, by extension, of a spirit apparition.

[287] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 232–240.

[288] See E. D'ESPÉRANCE, *Shadow Land* or *Light from the Other Side* (London: George Redway,

[1897]), containing spirit photographs of materialized entities Leila, Yolande, Y-Ay-Ali, etc., in plates between pp. 310–311, 392–393, and *passim*; and an introduction by AKSAKOF.

[289] See AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 127–178.

[290] AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

[291] (Trans. note) English excerpt partially reproduced from Harold H. U. CROSS, *A Cavalcade of the Supernatural* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1939), pp. 121–122.

[292] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 165.

[293] AKSAKOF, *op. cit.*, p. 57; and his preface to E. D'ESPÉRANCE, *Shadow Land*.

[294] See F. MARRYAT, *There is No Death* (New York: National Book Co., [1891]), ch. XVI and *passim*; and W. CROOKES, *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism*, pp. 108–112.

[295] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, pp. 158–159. (Trans. note: See also the original English article by Dr. T. L. NICHOLS in *The Spiritual Record*, pp. 377–380, London, Dec. 1883.)

[296] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, April 1905.

[297] (Tans. note) Of or pertaining to the *perispirit*.

[298] (Trans. note) F. MARRYAT, *There is No Death*, p. 141

[299] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 243.

[300] See Countess Constance WACHTMEISTER, *Spiritualism in the Light of Theosophy* (San Francisco: Mercury Print, 1897).

[301] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VI, no. 11, p. 673, Paris, May 1901.

[302] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VIII, no. 2, p. 97, Paris, August 1902.

[303] AKSAKOF, *Un Cas de Dématérialisation* (Paris: Librairie de l'Art Indépendante, 1896).

[304] See Col. H. S. OLCOTT, *People from the Other World* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1875), p. 484–488.

[305] See *The Annals of Psychical Sciences*, London, vol. II, no. 6, 1905, pp. 392–399.

[306] The medium was Dr. Monck, a Baptist minister. See G. DELANNE, *Les Apparitions Matérialisées de Vivants et des Morts*, vol. II (Paris: Leymarie, 1911), p. 521.

[307] (Trans. note) A small, handheld, one-piece microscope enclosed in a metal tube.

[308] (Trans. note) See footnote 57 above.

[309] E. D'ESPÉRANCE, *Shadow Land*, ch. XXIII, pp. 326–327.

[310] A. BINET and FERRÉ, *Le Magnétisme Animal*, p. 146 *et seq.* Dr. BEAUNIS, *Somnambulisme Provoqué*, p. 24 *et seq*. *Revue de l'Hypnotisme*, December 1887, p. 183; April 1889, p. 298; June 1890, p. 361. See also *Progrès Médical*, Paris, October 11 and 18, 1890, a report on a case of cyanosis by suggestion.

[311] See *Journal du Magnétisme*, Paris, vol. 56, no. 2, 1901, p. 53.

[312] *Bulletin de la Société des Études Psychiques de Marseille*, Aix-en-Provence, Jan.–Feb. 1903, p. 17.

[313] (Trans. note) M. Sage, *La Zone-frontière entre l'Autre Monde et Celui-ci* (Paris: Leymarie, 1903), p. 131.

[314] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 64.

[315] See G. DELANNE, *Evidence for a Future Life* (Trans. H. A. Dallas, London: P. Wellby, 1904),

part III, ch. IV, p. 243.

[316] See "Le Messager," *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VIII, no. 6, p. 382, Paris, December 1902.

[317] Robert Dale OWEN, *The Debatable Land* (New York: G. W. Carleton & Co., 1872), p. 477.

[318] (Trans. note) G. MARCONI, "A Note on the Effect of Daylight upon the Propagation of Electromagnetic Impulses," in *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, vol. 70, p. 344–347, London, June 12, 1902.

[319] (Trans. note) *Historic Magazine and Notes and Queries*, Volume 27, Manchester, 1909; and several other publications.

[320] As reproduced from the *Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society* in M. SAGE, *Mrs. Piper* (Trans. N. Robertson, New York: Scott-Thaw, 1904), ch. XVIII, p. 172.

[321] *Ibid*.

[322] *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VIII, no. 6, pp. 239, 371, Paris, December 1902. (Trans. note: See also J. H. HYSLOP, *Science and a Future Life* [Boston: H. Turner & Co., 1905], pp. 106–107; 300–301.)

[323] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 332.

[324] *Ibid.*, pp. 555–559.

[325] See G. DELANNE, *Recherches sur la Médiumnité*, p. 463.

[326] See W. Stainton MOSES, *Spirit Teachings* (London: Spiritualist Alliance, 1898), section XII, pp. 92–100. See also L. DENIS, *Life and Destiny*.

[327] (Trans. note) Originally published in *Light*, vol. XIX, no. 959, pp. 242-243, London, May 27, 1899. N. B. Pages 242-243 are missing from an extant copy of the journal, hence the English trans. above had to be paraphrased from L. DENIS's French quote.

[328] (Trans. note) Neither "G. Owen" (Robert Dale Owen?) nor the article quoted above were found in extant copies of the American magazine *The Spiritual Record*. The deceased senator might have been William F. Knox of the Seventh Senatorial District, California.

[329] See *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XII, XIII, XIV, XV. (Summarized above in ch. XIX, "Trance and Incorporations.")

[330] (Trans. note) Minot J. Savage, *Can Telepathy Explain?* (New York and London: Putnam's Sons, 1902), pp. 106, 107–108.

[331] See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 20, no. 7 and 8, pp. 119–120, Paris, April 1 and 16, 1910.

[332] (Trans. note) In 1910, 75,000 Brazilian *réis* would be worth about USD $580 today.

[333] See *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, vol. 20, no. 17 and 18, p. 275, Paris, September 1 and 16, 1910. 26th case of spirit identification reported by E. BOZZANO.

[334] (Trans. note) *Revue Scientifique et Morale du Spiritisme*, vol. VI, no. 9, pp. 537–541, Paris, March 1901.

[335] Paris: Charconac, 1908; p. 280 *et seq*.

[336] See ch. XIX above, p. 318.

[337] AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 542.

[338] *Compte rendu du IV Congrès International de Psychologie*, Dr. T. PASCAL's report, p. 710. See

also *Le Lotus Bleu*, vol. 11, p. 277, Paris, October 27, 1900.

[339] The *Revue Spirite*, year 46, no. 1, pp. 29–30, Paris, Jan. 1903.

[340] (Trans. note) The original excerpts reproduced herein are from the *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. VIII (1892), pp. 249–251.

[341] Short form of Benjamin.

[342] (Trans. note) "How I Know that the Dead Return," orig. article above reproduced from *The Reviews of Reviews*, Jan. 1909.

[343] (Trans. note) Excerpt translated from DENIS's French, as no extant copy of the German original could be located.

[344] (Trans. note) Correct journal title and issue.

[345] See also AKSAKOF, *Animisme et Spiritisme*, p. 568.

[346] See also Louis GARDY, *Le Médium D. D. Home* (Paris: Librairie du Magnétisme, [1896]), pp. 78–83.

[347] (Trans. note) Th. DAREL (the literary pseudonym of Adèle Erath-Tissot), *La Folie* (Geneva: Félix Alcan, 1901), *passim.*

[348] A. KARDEC, *The Mediums' Book*, part one, ch. XVIII.

[349] See in Eugène NUS, *Choses de l'Autre Monde* (Paris: Dentu, 1880), p. 138, the case of Victor Hennequin, who, persisting in experimenting alone and without control, ended up demented. He claimed to receive from the mediumistic table communications of "The Spirit of the Earth," and believed himself to be a "demigod" of the planet. But perhaps this was just a phenomenon of unconscious autosuggestion.

[350] See *Le Spiritualisme Moderne*, Paris, April 1903, p. 57.

[351] (Trans. note) English excerpts reproduced from *Psychic Power*, vol. II, no. 2, Chicago, March 1923.

[352] (Trans. note) London, George Redway, [1897].

[353] See ch. XIX above.

[354] Reproduced from the *Revue Spirite*, year 45, 1902, p. 747.

[355] Moses MAIMONIDES, *Rabi Mosei Aegyptij Dux seu Director dubitantium aut perplexorum* (Paris: Badius Ascencius, 1520). Trans. Münck, vol. I, p. 328.

[356] *Le Gaulois*, June 2,1907.

[357] T. FLOURNOY, *Esprits et Médiums* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1911), p. 340.

[358] See, among others, *La Revue du Monde Invisible* of Mgr Méric, *L'Écho du Merveilleux* of Mme. Gaston Méry, and the recent pamphlet of a doctor of letters of Lyons, on Spiritism, approved by the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons (Paris: Librairie Catholique, 1911).

[359] 2Pet 3:9.

[360] Within the churches, Spiritism has its supporters. The French Fr. Lacordaire, Fr. Didon, Fr. Lebrun of l'Oratoire, Abbots Poussin, Lecanu, Marouzeau, the venerable Abbé Grimaud, Fr. Marchal, and with them a number of pastors (see L. DENIS, *Christianisme et Spiritisme*, New Ed., Paris, 1910, pp. 71-74) have all seen, in the manifestations of spirits, an act of the divine will exercising in a new form to elevate human thought above material horizons.

[361] The *Banner of Light*, vol. 85, no. 23, of August 5, 1899, Boston, announces that a vast

association was seized among certain professional mediums, for the exploitation of the good Spiritualist public. This association sent to all professional mediums its circular offering a series of instruments intended to imitate the Spiritist manifestations, with indication of prices, ranging from 1 to 5 dollars.

[362] See the *Revue Spirite*, February and April 1909.

[363] See Annales des Sciences Psychiques, December 1908.

[364] This action is no longer contested in high places. Official science, says Professor Falcomer, teaches now that a subject can be deceived by a mental suggestion from another. See "Phénoménographie," by Professor FALCOMER in the *Revue Spirite*, 1903, p. 173.

[365] Gabriel DELANNE, *Recherches sur la Médiumnité*, p. 185.

[366] Stainton MOSES (alias M. A. Oxon), *Spirit Identity*, p. 20.

[367] See *Light*, vol. XV, no. 732, p. 29, London, January 19, 1895.

[368] For details see *La Revue des Études Psychiques*, Paris, January 1903, p. 15 *et seq*.

[369] (Trans. note) The public burning to death of a heretic, here symbolized by books, as in the Spanish Inquisition.

[370] *Revue Bleue*, March 22,1902. La psychologie du médium.

[371] *Proceedings of the SPR*, vol. XVII, June 1902, p. 71.

[372] T. FLOURNOY, *From India to the Planet Mars*, pp. 46–48.

[373] See ch. XIX above, p. 252.

[374] *Light*, London, Mars 22, 1902, p. 143.

[375] (Trans. note) See footnote 57 above.

[376] (Trans. note) F. von SHLEGEL, idea 43 in *Selected Ideas* (1799–1800), translated by Ernst BEHLER *et al*.

[377] According to the Scriptures, *to prophesy* does not mean only predicting or guessing, but also to be moved by a good or evil spirit (see I, *Reg*., trans. Glaire, ch. XVIII, 10). The following expressions are often found in the mouths of the prophets: Ezekiel and Zechariah would say, "the burden of the Lord," when they prophesied, or, "the Spirit entered into me" (Ez 3:24 *ESV*). These terms clearly indicate the sensation that precedes the trance, and then the possession of the medium by the spirit. And again: I saw and here are "The words of him who has..." (which designates mediums of vision and hearing simultaneously). "If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision." (Nm 12:6) "I will put my words in his mouth." (Dt 18:18) "The Spirit lifted me up and took me away." (Ez 3:14) A case of levitation which also applies to the apostle Philip. As in our day, mediumship also spread over both sexes. There were prophets and prophetesses. Among the latter, the most famous are Mary, sister of Moses; Deborah; Holda; Anne, mother of Samuel; Abigail; Esther; Sarah; Rebekah; and Judith.

[378] See, for the schools of prophets, the well documented study of G. R. MEIGNAN, *Les Prophètes d'Israël*, "Considérations préliminaires" ["Preliminary considerations"] (Paris: Lecoffre, 1894), p. 14 *et seq*.

[379] In prophetic vision, successive visual planes are often reversed, and the laws of perspective turned upside down. This is what makes the prophetic oracles of all times so obscure, the biblical oracles in particular. All the events of history are foreseen by God and engraved in his light. The great difficulty is to be able and to know how to read them; because it is very difficult to distinguish the past from the future in such rapid vision. This is why the oracle always speaks in the past even when it is the present. Thus the great human epic, with its dramas, its episodes so numerous and so turbulent, is

inscribed in the divine light, from which it can be reflected, by concreting itself, in the brain of the seer.

[380] (Trans. note) The author seems to refer to Amos Gerry Beman (1812–1872), an African American pastor.

[381] Whether it be a voice, a light, a vision or any other phenomenon, the seer exclaims something like: "I have seen God." Jacob struggles with a stranger and says, "I saw God face to face." (Gn 32:30 *ESV*) Elsewhere we read: "And the LORD appeared to him ... as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him." (Gn 18:1–2) These men converse with Abraham and accompany Lot. It is evident that the text means men of God or spirits. "I see a god coming up out of the earth," (1Sm 28:13) says the medium at Endor to Saul. We know that this is the spirit of Samuel, no doubt is possible (1Kgs)). Samuel predicted to Saul his next death and that of his sons, an event that was fully fulfilled.

[382] (Trans. note) As paraphrased by L. DENIS.

[383] 2Edras or 4 Esdras 10:41–44 (according to some scholars.)

[384] 1Sam 16:14.

[385] L. DENIS, *Christianisme et Spiritisme*, p. 57 *et seq*.

[386] Also spelled Mohammed.

[387] See Barthélemy SAINT-HILAIRE, *Mahomet et le Coran*, pp. 103, 158. "The Koran has remained the most beautiful monument of the language in which it was written, and I see nothing of the kind in the religious history of mankind. This explains the enormous influence which this book has had upon the Arabs; they are convinced that Mohammed, whose instruction was rudimentary, could not write such book, and that it was dictated to him by an angel."

[388] The Koran (Trans. Kasimirski.), ch. LIII, 1–11.

[389] Caussin de PERCEVAL, *Essai sur l'Histoire des Arabes*.

[390] E. BONNEMÈRE, *L'Âme et ses Manifestations à travers l'Histoire* (Paris: Dentu, n. d. [1881]), p. 210.

[391] Roselly de LORGUES, *Christophe Colomb* (Paris: Didier, 1856), p. 465

[392] (Trans. note) See footnote 127 above.

[393] Joseph FABRE, *Procès de Condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, vol. I, pp. 162–176.

[394] V. HUGO, *Works of Victor Hugo: Shakespeare*, (Trans. Sir F. T. Marzials: Nottingham Soc., 1907) p. 24.

[395] P. BERTHELOT, *Louis Ménard et Son Œuvre*, p. 64.

[396] According to a recent hypothesis, the main works of Shakespeare should be attributed to (Francis) Bacon. Other critics, based on Bacon's relations with Occultists and Kabbalists of the time, make Shakespeare the medium of Bacon. In any event, the reported facts retain their full interest and significance. (Trans. note: With such remarks, L. DENIS seems to suggest someone centuries older than Francis Bacon, who was an exact contemporary of Shakespeare, supposedly writing under a nom de plume, and not as a discarnate spirit. Anyway this theory is largely debunked today. See footnote 406 below.)

[397] F. RABBE, *Shelley*, vol. I (London: Ward & Downey, 1888).

[398] "Wie ein Schlafwandler (Like a sleepwalker)," said Goethe, according to the *Occult Review*.

[399] *Annales Politiques et Littéraires*, July 25 and Aug. 22, 1897.

[400] P. MARIÉTON, *Une Histoire d'Amour*, 1897, p. 168.

[401]G. SAND, *Elle et Lui* (Grenoble: Aurore-Glénat, 1859), XII.

[402] L. COLET, *Lui: roman conteporain* (4th ed., Paris: Michel Lévy, 1883), XXIII, pp. 368–369.

[403]*Ibid*., pp. 369–381.

[404]G. SAND, *Elle et Lui*, ch. VIII and XI; L. COLET, *Lui*, ch. VI, VII and XXIII.

[405] C. FLAMMARION, *L'Inconnu – The Unknown* (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1900), p. 308.

[406](Trans. note) Roger Bacon (c. 1219–1292) should not be confused with Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), an exact contemporary of Shakespeare, controversially threw into a Shakespeare authorship debate in the 19th century. See footnote 396 above.

[407]Petit de JULLEVILLE, *Histoire de la Littérature Française* (Paris: A. Colon, 1899), ESSARTS's article on CHATEAUBRIAND, in vol. VII, "XIXe siècle, Période romantique (1800-1850)," p. 4.

[408]*Revue Latine et Journal des Débats*, September 6, 1903.

[409] V. HUGO, *William Shakespeare*, pp. 49–50.

[410] See ch. XVII above.

[411](Trans. note) Literally, "The cave came to the vatic poet's aid" – Latin phrase used by V. HUGO when referring to mediumship.

[412](Trans. note) "The absent are present." Latin expression.

[413] (Trans. note) Heine's recounting appeared in the journal *Echo du Merveilleux*, vol. III, no. 59, p. 238, June 15, 1899.

[414]*Le Journal*, August 5, 1899.

[415]*Paix Universelle*, November 15, 1910.

[416]TACITUS, *The Histories*, Book IV, ch. LXXXI.

[417](Trans. note) The author clearly used the term *thaumaturge* or *thaumaturgist* to refer to certain healing mediums and magnetizers who only cured those who could afford them.

[418] (Trans. note) Apocryphal detail not in the Bible but found in Ascen. Isa. 5:1–16. *Cf.* also Hb 11:37.

[419]Alphonse de LAMARTINE (Méditation XI, "l'Enthousiasm") described this state in superb verses:

So when you prevail over my soul,
O enthusiasm, victorious eagle,
I shudder with a holy horror,
At the sound of your flaming wings;
I struggle under your power,
I'm afraid your presence would
Annihilate a mortal heart,
Like a fire lit by lightning,
Which never goes out but consumes
Pyre, temple and altar.
Yet to the rise of thought, in vain
The instincts of the senses oppose.
Under this god my soul thus burdened
Springs up, takes over, and beats on my breast.
The lightning now circulates in my veins.

Astonished by the fire that burns me,
I fight it out, consequently enraging it;
Then the lava of my genius,
Overflowing in torrents of harmony,
Consumes me, as it escapes through.

[420](Trans. note) Among certain French writers, “The Church,” with a capital C, was a conventional way of referring to the then still dominant Catholic church until the end of WWII.

[421] See L. Denis, *Christianisme et Spiritisme*, ch. IV and V.

[422] See R. Decartes, *Olympiques*. Mr. A. Fouillée, in his biography of *Descartes* (Paris: Hachette, 1893, p. 12), writes about this inspiration: “He (Descartes) regarded it as a revelation of the spirit of truth about the path he had to follow. For he had a fiery imagination, a kind of internal exaltation which verged, says Voltaire, on singularity! ... In one of his notes he writes about this decisive day, by gratitude for what he believed to have received a divine inspiration: ‘Before the end of November, I will go to Lorette and will go on foot from Venice.’”